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7 PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING

8 ON ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

9 KIRTLAND AIR FORCE BASE PERIMETER BOUNDARY

10 June 23, 2003

11 6:45 p.m.

12 Wyndham Hotel

13 2910 Yale Boulevard, Southeast

14 Albuquerque, New Mexico

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24 (5864-18) MAS

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1       MR. MILLIGAN: Ladies and gentlemen, if I  
2 can have your attention, please. If you would, take  
3 a seat, if you have one, or grab a chair, and we'll  
4 go ahead and get started.

5       I wish you folks would come to our  
6 restoration advisory board meetings, our quarterly  
7 meetings. It's been like pulling teeth to get folks  
8 to come to our meeting. So maybe I'll change the  
9 name on the next meeting.

10       I'd like to thank you all for coming out  
11 tonight. My name is Steve Milligan. I'm with the  
12 Public Affairs Office for Kirtland Air Force Base  
13 and on behalf of Colonel Kathleen Close, commander,  
14 I want to welcome you and thank you for coming to  
15 take part in the meeting of the draft environmental  
16 assessment for a proposed perimeter fence for  
17 Kirtland Air Force Base.

18       We welcome your comments. That's what  
19 we're here for tonight. We will try to keep this on  
20 a level where we can share comments. We have a  
21 court reporter here, Mary Abernathy Seal, with Bean

22 & Associates, and she'll be taking down all of your  
23 uh-huhs and everything else. And we'll have a  
24 transcript available probably in seven to ten days.  
25 So if anybody wants a copy of that, just let us

1 know, and we'll make sure we get that to you.

2 I'd like to recognize a few folks from our  
3 congressional staff, field representative from  
4 Senator Domenici's office, Joyce Pullen. Is she  
5 here?

6 From Senator Bingaman's office, Danny  
7 Milo.

8 From Congresswoman Heather Wilson's  
9 office, Carri Phillis.

10 Do we have someone from Tom Udall's  
11 office? He said he would be here, but --

12 And representing Colonel Close, Colonel  
13 Linda Jones, 377th Mission Support Group commander.

14 One thing I would like to express, the  
15 important thing to remember here tonight is that no  
16 decision has been made, and that all comments that  
17 are made tonight and during the public comment  
18 period, which ends July 16th, will be taken into  
19 consideration, and will be addressed before a final  
20 document is produced.

21 As far as ground rules for tonight, I

22 don't think we really need to go into too much  
23 detail on that. We've got a good group here. I  
24 think this is a passionate issue that's understood,  
25 and I think as long as we respect one another and

1 listen to what everybody has to say, those comments  
2 can be recorded, and that's important.

3       And for those people who have signed up to  
4 speak, if you would identify yourselves when you  
5 come up so we make sure we have your name recorded  
6 properly. We've got the room until 9:00, but it  
7 looks like we may go a little bit beyond that, and I  
8 don't think that will be a problem.

9       Just a couple of logistical things.  
10 Comment sheets are available in the lobby, so you  
11 can fill those out and they can either be faxed or  
12 mailed back to us, or you can just, if you want to,  
13 fill them out tonight and leave them here. That's  
14 fine. You can do that as well.

15       After the Air Force presentation we'll  
16 take a real short break. There are some charts out  
17 in the hall that you can take a look at. If you  
18 have any questions, you can come up and we'll try  
19 and get an answer for you. If we can't, we'll  
20 record it so we can.

21       After the short break the Friends of Otero

22 will speak, and also others who have signed up  
23 tonight who I'm assuming are Friends of Otero that  
24 would also like to speak, and we'll make sure that  
25 we'll keep the time to five minutes. If someone



1 wants to defer their time to another person who  
2 needs a little more than five minutes, we can do  
3 that as well.

4       So without any further ado we'll go ahead  
5 and get started. Also DOE, Department of Energy,  
6 has a position sheet, paper, that's available on the  
7 table outside.

8       First to speak is Walt Moore with  
9 LopezGarcia Group. They're a contractor to the Air  
10 Force and author of the environmental assessment.

11       MR. MOORE: Good evening. Welcome to this  
12 public information meeting regarding the proposed  
13 replacement of a fence along the eastern boundary of  
14 Kirtland Air Force Base. I'm Walt Moore, and I'm  
15 the project manager for the environmental  
16 assessment, in addressing the potential  
17 environmental impacts of the proposed action.

18       I'd like to make it clear that in spite of  
19 what you may have heard, my company will not benefit  
20 in any way from the fencing activity we'll discuss  
21 tonight. We only write environmental documents for

22 the base, and we don't provide any engineering or

23 construction support to the base. I actually read

24 that on the Otero web site.

25 I'd like to start with a little background

1 on the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA.  
2 It was signed into law on January 1970 with the  
3 purpose of requiring federal agencies to prepare  
4 detailed statements for, quote, major federal  
5 actions significantly affecting the quality of the  
6 human environment, end quote.

7       Before commencing any project, therefore,  
8 a federal agency must determine whether a proposed  
9 action is major, federal, and action, and whether it  
10 may affect the quality of the human environment. If  
11 a project meets all of these criteria, the agency  
12 must determine whether the environmental effects of  
13 the proposed action are significant.

14       And there are some criteria for  
15 significance. If an agency determines that a  
16 proposed federal action may have a significant  
17 effect on the quality of the human environment, then  
18 an environmental impact statement, or EIS, is  
19 prepared.

20       EIS is a formal document that contains  
21 considerations of the environmental effects of the

22 proposed action, including adverse effects that  
23 cannot be avoided; alternatives; the relationship  
24 between the short-term and long-term uses of the  
25 environment and the irreversible and irretrievable

1 commitment of resources.

2       An environmental assessment, which is what  
3 we've done, is prepared when significant  
4 environmental impacts are not anticipated or when  
5 there is a question as to the extent of the  
6 potential impacts, as in this case. If the  
7 assessment confirms that the proposed action would  
8 have no significant impacts, a finding of no  
9 significant impact, which we shortened to call  
10 FONSI, is prepared.

11       If there would be significant impacts, a  
12 more detailed analysis process is performed and the  
13 findings are documented in an EIS. So the EA is the  
14 let's find out if there's a problem, if we're not  
15 sure. If there is one, we do an EIS. If there's  
16 not, we go to the FONSI.

17       An EA covers the same topics and issues as  
18 an EIS, only in a more streamlined process. Public  
19 comments can be submitted within 30 days of release  
20 of an EA, or in this case it's been extended for  
21 another 30 days. These comments are considered

22 prior to making the final decision and are responded  
23 to in an appendix to the EA. So all comments that  
24 have been received to date, all comments that are  
25 recorded tonight by the court reporter, any comments

1 that are sent in via writing or e-mail up until the  
2 end of the comment period, which is the 16th -- all  
3 of those will be responded to in the final EA, the  
4 one that you guys have looked at up to now as the  
5 draft.

6 Counsel on Environmental Quality, or CEQ,  
7 regulations implementing NEPA suggest the EA should  
8 only be 10 to 15 pages in length. That was a long  
9 time ago. It is often not possible to stay within  
10 these page limits, especially if information related  
11 to a permit is included.

12 It is, however, instructive to understand  
13 CEQ's philosophy on what they would like to see as  
14 the brevity of an EA. The document should only  
15 provide detailed information on issues for which  
16 there's a potential for significant impact.

17 Briefly, the subject areas addressed are:  
18 Project description, purpose and need, alternatives  
19 considered, the impacts, and comments and  
20 coordination. This EA is currently close to 100  
21 pages, and by the time we include the comments, it's

22 going to be significantly more than that.

23       An EA need not be circulated for comment,

24 but must be made available for public inspection. A

25 notice of availability must be placed in local



1 newspapers. The availability period for an EA is  
2 usually 30 days, but may be less under rare  
3 circumstances, and it's often extended, as this one  
4 was.

5       Following the public availability period  
6 and receipt of comments on the EA, the next step is  
7 a determination of significance of impacts. And as  
8 I said, if we find no significance, it's a FONSI.  
9 If there are significant impacts that are  
10 encountered, then they automatically will do an EIS.

11       The FONSI is simply a statement that as a  
12 result of the environmental analysis, an interagency  
13 review describing the EA, a project was found to  
14 have no significant impacts on the quality of the  
15 human environment. It includes the EA modified to  
16 reflect all applicable comments and responses to  
17 those comments.

18       Also, if it was not done in the EA, the  
19 FONSI must include the applicant's recommendation or  
20 selected alternative. The FONSI availability is  
21 much like that of the EA. No formal circulation is

22 required, but the public is notified through notice

23 in the newspapers.

24       Now I'd like to discuss the history of the

25 withdrawn area proposed for fencing. And the

1 withdrawn area is to the right of the dotted line  
2 down sort of the center there. It's property which  
3 was withdrawn from public use in 1943 for purposes  
4 of military training and public safety, and has been  
5 used exclusively for those purposes since that time.

6 Many of the activities that occur in the  
7 withdrawn area are hazardous, and the public has  
8 been excluded from the property for obvious safety  
9 reasons.

10 Testing of military weapons occurred on  
11 this property, and portions of the land were used as  
12 an impact point for multiple kind of projectiles  
13 which were being developed during and after World  
14 War II. These included proximity fuses for  
15 long-range five-inch naval shells that were used to  
16 shoot down enemy aircraft. Residue from these  
17 shells and other projectiles, including  
18 high-explosive rounds, can still be found in the  
19 withdrawn area.

20 Warning signs have been posted for many  
21 years at locations where people have attempted to

22 enter the withdrawn area. These signs are regularly  
23 removed, often within days of being posted, thereby  
24 exposing those who recreate in the area to potential  
25 danger.

1       The proposed fence, as shown on here,  
2   which is the dotted line down the right-hand side,  
3   will make it obvious that there is a boundary there  
4   for those who inadvertently cross the boundary. I  
5   crossed it inadvertently the other day and hiked up  
6   Otero Canyon.

7       In 2002 Kirtland completed a survey of  
8   active and historic ranges on base, and the  
9   resulting report describes the type of munitions  
10   found on each range. As you can see from this  
11   graphic, range H22, which starts here and covers  
12   this entire area, back to here, this was where  
13   obviously they were shooting from. H22 includes a  
14   major portion of the withdrawal area, including the  
15   eastern edge of the property.

16       Based on the information in the range  
17   survey report, Kirtland has requested funds to begin  
18   the remediation process of the unexploded ordinance,  
19   or UXO, which is found in the withdrawal area, with  
20   priority being given to the area along the eastern  
21   boundary where trespassers are most active.

22       The area first must be studied to  
23 determine the extent of the problem, and then  
24 funding will be sought for the cleanup activities.  
25 Until this funding is received and the remediation

1 process is completed, the area will continue to be  
2 unsafe for public use.

3       In addition to the historic use of the  
4 area, military units currently train in portions of  
5 the withdrawn area. On this graphic you can see --  
6 well, actually, this one doesn't show the helicopter  
7 landing zones, but the Major will show you there are  
8 helicopter landing zones here, here, here, and here  
9 that are currently in use by the 58th SOW, and he'll  
10 talk about that in a minute.

11       And there also is a drop zone used to  
12 train the parajumper and combat rescue school guys  
13 that were in the movie "Perfect Storm." The guys  
14 that rescued the guys out of the water were  
15 actually -- I think one of them was actually trained  
16 here, and their drop zone is right about here.

17       Both these schools train Air Force  
18 officers and enlisted personnel in tactics and  
19 skills vital to our current and future military  
20 operations. Graduates of these schools also  
21 participate in civilian search and rescue operations

22 across the US.

23       And by the way, these guys when they

24 train, the PJs, when they train, train with local

25 fire departments and search and rescue operations,



1 and they ride with local ambulances as a way that  
2 they get further training, and that's all donated  
3 time.

4       There are many other users of the  
5 withdrawn area, including Air Force military police.  
6 They have firing ranges out there, shooting ranges,  
7 the Department of Energy, and the Air Force research  
8 laboratory.

9       As a further example of the hazardous  
10 activities that occur in the area, this is the M60  
11 machine gun range. An M60 fires a bullet about the  
12 size of my thumb. This is an active range and the  
13 abandoned Air Force fire tower is right about there.  
14 The safety fan for that range is what's shown on  
15 that. That's where they can anticipate that  
16 ricochets might go.

17       You can see where the base has safety  
18 concerns about this area. Because of the dangers  
19 inherent to the types of activities that have  
20 occurred here, as well as the ongoing research and  
21 development, testing and training missions, base

- 22 personnel access to the withdrawn area is restricted
- 23 to specific locations and times. Base personnel
- 24 can't get out there except when it is made very
- 25 clear that the area is not active and there's no

1 training going on, and no firing ranges are being  
2 used, no DOE testing is being done.

3        Personnel with a need to be there are  
4 briefed on the hazards and instructed on what to do  
5 if they see any UXO before being allowed into the  
6 area.

7        The new boundary fence is intended to  
8 deter public access to the withdrawal area by  
9 replacing existing three-strand barbed-wire fencing  
10 where it exists -- in some cases it's gone -- with  
11 eight-foot-high chain-link fencing. It is hoped  
12 that the new fencing will deter the honest people  
13 who recreate in this area and will help to prevent  
14 possible injuries from UXO or testing or training  
15 activities, as well as provide protection from  
16 terrorist attacks on base facilities and personnel.

17        It will make it more difficult, although  
18 certainly not impossible, for unauthorized personnel  
19 to access the eastern side of the base. With a  
20 proposed fence in place, anyone on base will be  
21 there deliberately and knowingly. There will be no

22 accidental crossings of the base boundaries.

23       The proposed east fence would prevent

24 unauthorized access to the several miles of trails

25 on base property that are currently used by the

1 public for recreation. I have been on them, too.  
2 They're great. It would not affect the many miles  
3 of trails that lie outside the base boundary to the  
4 north and east, and would not close the northern  
5 portion of Otero Canyon to public use.

6       The base boundary is over a mile and a  
7 half south of the trail head in Cedro Canyon, and  
8 the current trail connects with multiple trails that  
9 run east and south outside the base. People will be  
10 able to continue to use those trails outside the  
11 fence in Otero Canyon and the vicinity.

12       In addition, US Forest Service, who will  
13 speak tonight, plans to reroute and construct  
14 connections among the trails affected by the fence  
15 that would make access to other trails in the area  
16 even easier. As a result, the Otero Canyon trail  
17 would continue to allow access to many miles of  
18 trails which would not be affected by construction  
19 of the fence.

20       Kirtland continues to work with the US  
21 Forest Service to determine how and where new trails

22 or connections among existing trails will be  
23 developed. Hikers and bikers who use the area could  
24 also volunteer to assist the Forest Service with  
25 trail construction.

1       The December 2002 draft document included  
2 several alternatives which were considered but not  
3 carried forward, which would have allowed continued  
4 public access to the eastern edge of the base. On  
5 further consideration -- let me show you where they  
6 are, because I don't know if you can see them. The  
7 first alternative was to put a fence between old  
8 Kirtland and what used to be Sandia Base, which is  
9 now the withdrawn area. Right straight down here.  
10 Unfortunately, that cut through a number of existing  
11 DOE facilities.

12       Alternative 2 ran out like this in a blob.

13       Alternative 3 was larger and follows  
14 Madera Canyon down like that.

15       And alternative 4 was originally suggested  
16 by the Save Otero group, and it excluded that  
17 portion of --

18       SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: That's not true.

19       MR. MOORE: Okay, sorry. This portion was  
20 suggested in an attempt to compromise and leave this  
21 portion of the canyon.

22           SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: In a 1996 Forest

23 Service document.

24           MR. MOORE: Okay, thank you. On further

25 consideration, these proposals were deleted from the



1 list of alternatives because UXO in the area has not  
2 been removed and presents a danger to anyone using  
3 that area.

4       In addition, military and Department of  
5 Energy operations and testing continue in that area,  
6 and it would be irresponsible of the Air Force to  
7 allow public access to such an area.

8       Even without the UXO issues, the  
9 operations and testing activities that occur in the  
10 withdrawn area are vital to the continued existence  
11 of many of the tenants at Kirtland. The current  
12 draft EA contains two alternatives, one of which  
13 uses terrain features in lieu of fencing, which  
14 would be if there were steep enough cliffs, they  
15 wouldn't fence it. That's one of the alternatives,  
16 where those features exist.

17       And then there's also a no-action  
18 alternative, which is to leave things as they are  
19 now with no fence at all.

20       The findings in the draft EA are  
21 summarized in the executive summary as a part of the

22 document and in the handout you received when you  
23 came in tonight. There will be changes made as a  
24 result of your comments on the draft document. For  
25 those who actually read the document, thank you for

1 taking the time to do so. As a result of comments  
2 already received, we will be addressing the  
3 potential socioeconomic impact of the proposed  
4 action on the communities near Otero Canyon.

5       We will also address concerns raised by  
6 the Forest Service regarding access for firefighting  
7 personnel and equipment in the area proposed for  
8 fencing. Your careful consideration of the  
9 documents and comments based on that consideration  
10 will make it a better document, and will provide  
11 Kirtland with better information on which to base  
12 the decision of how to proceed with this action.

13       To summarize the findings very briefly  
14 from the EA, implementation of the proposed action  
15 could result in minor short-term negative impacts to  
16 air quality, noise, and soils from  
17 construction-related activities.

18       Minor beneficial impacts are expected to  
19 occur in the area of human health and safety and  
20 socioeconomics. No impacts are anticipated to occur  
21 to current land use, water resources, flood plains,

22 vegetation, wildlife, weapons, minority, and

23 low-income populations, cultural resources, visual

24 resources, transportation or hazardous wastes.

25       If they implement alternative 1, it would

1 result in similar, although slightly smaller,  
2 impacts to the same resources I have already  
3 mentioned. As I stated before, we will revise the  
4 draft EA based on comments received during the  
5 public comment period which has been extended to the  
6 16th of July 2003. Your comments can be submitted  
7 by regular mail -- snail mail -- or e-mail to the  
8 addresses on the comments sheets available here  
9 tonight. You can also handwrite them and hand them  
10 to the person at the back of the room, or state them  
11 to the court reporter who is here this evening. You  
12 will have to talk slower than I do, though.

13       All comments will be considered and  
14 responses will be provided in the final EA.  
15 Comments will be grouped by category, and a table of  
16 categories will be included in the document, along  
17 with the response to each category. Copies of EA  
18 will be made available at the same locations as the  
19 draft, and it will be included on the Kirtland Air  
20 Force Base web site.

21       Thank you for your time and your interest

22 in this proposal.

23 MR. MILLIGAN: I don't think there's a web

24 site or an e-mail address listed on that comment

25 sheet. And I think Teri's name is on there, Teri

1 Monaghan. It's on the sheet. Her name and spelling  
2 is on the sheet. I believe it's T-E-R-I. So  
3 Teri.Monaghan@Kirtland.AF.MIL. And there's a fax  
4 number on there, as well. You can also fax or leave  
5 it here tonight.

6 And again, this doesn't end here tonight.  
7 July 16th is still a ways off and we still have time  
8 to talk about these issues and the concerns that you  
9 have. You know, we can still address those.

10 Next I'd like to introduce Cliff Dils with  
11 the US Forest Service.

12 MR. DILS: I asked Walt to put up the last  
13 overhead so that I can kind of use that as just some  
14 general information, because I know there are some  
15 questions about it.

16 First of all, from about this line over is  
17 National Forest System lands that have been  
18 withdrawn for the Department of Defense or  
19 Department of Energy in a series of different pieces  
20 of legislation starting in the 1950s.

21 When we talk about withdrawn lands, a lot

22 of people don't know what that means and that's  
23 basically what it means. It doesn't mean that  
24 they're not Forest Service lands, but instead of  
25 being a multiple use area, an area where people can



1 go out and bike and hike and fish or hunt or do  
2 whatever they want to do out there, these lands were  
3 withdrawn for primarily the use of the Department of  
4 Energy and Department of Defense.

5       And so the Forest Service's responsibility  
6 on these lands is kind of like being the steward for  
7 those resources out there in those areas for their  
8 uses. So as Walt kind of went over, we've talked  
9 all the uses and everything else. I think he did a  
10 good job of that, but I want to make sure everybody  
11 understood how come these are withdrawn lands.

12       Talk about alternative 4. Alternative 4  
13 was a proposal by the Forest Service, and I heard a  
14 couple of people say that in this process  
15 alternative 4 is a portion of the 1996 decision,  
16 which I know a number of folks have talked to me  
17 about and are familiar with, and it was an option to  
18 take a look at some use within the area. You know,  
19 some continued use.

20       One of the biggest issues, obviously, and  
21 Walt has touched on it, is unexploded ordinance, and

22 the 1996 decision, which was about 1100 acres and it  
23 is roughly -- and this little piece there -- it's  
24 that eastern. But one of the primary reasons that  
25 decision was never implemented was because of the

1 unexploded ordinance. It was the fact that, you  
2 know, we haven't been able to have that cleared and  
3 make it safe for the public.

4       A lot of people have said, "Well, what  
5 does the Forest Service want out here? What would  
6 we like to see?"

7       Obviously, by congressional direction,  
8 we've managed the lands for the Department of  
9 Defense and Department of Energy. Last time I  
10 checked, I haven't gotten congressional delegation  
11 above that level. So you know, they tell us how  
12 they want the lands managed.

13       Secondly, we are also concerned about the  
14 safety for the public out there, and what we're  
15 hoping is that through this process there is a way  
16 that we can deal with some of those issues, that we  
17 can see that we can move forward.

18       I know the Air Force has already looked at  
19 trying to get some funding and everything else, so  
20 that portions of the lands that aren't to be used  
21 operationally by the Department of Energy or

22 Department of Defense could continue to be used by  
23 the public out there.

24       With that, I don't have a whole lot more  
25 at this point and I can visit with people in the

1 halls when we take a break.

2 MR. MILLIGAN: Next I'd like to introduce  
3 Rich Garcia, with Air Force Research Lab.

4 MR. GARCIA: Good evening, all. I work  
5 with the Air Force Research Laboratory, the Directed  
6 Energy Directorate, and I appreciate the opportunity  
7 of coming here and sharing with you some of the  
8 research activities that we have in that general  
9 area. Let me emphasize, though, that we do not have  
10 any facilities in the Otero Canyon area, but we do  
11 have some facilities in the withdrawn national  
12 Forest Service land and so obviously we have some  
13 concerns about the Otero Canyon fencing proposal.

14 This is the first of the facilities I'm  
15 going to talk about. This is our high-energy  
16 research and technology facility. It was completed  
17 about ten years ago at a cost of \$9 million, and our  
18 scientists work in that facility, working on  
19 advanced defense technologies.

20 The second area, second facility, is our  
21 Starfire Optical Range. This is also in that

22 general area. We have a number of telescopes out

23 there, and we have the world's most sophisticated

24 telescope system out there.

25       It's a three-and-a-half-meter telescope

1 and just as a byproduct of the research that we do  
2 out there with this telescope, it's been a benefit  
3 to the city and the astronomical community in being  
4 able to see objects in space with a quantum jump in  
5 clarity that just wasn't possible before.

6       The next facility isn't quite built yet.  
7 This last February Senators Domenici and Bingaman  
8 officiated at a ground-breaking ceremony for this  
9 facility. It's a \$15.5 million advance optical  
10 research facility. And that will enlarge and  
11 improve our capabilities at the Starfire Optical  
12 Range. Over the past few years, we have increased  
13 the number and frequency of testing in that area,  
14 and all indications are that our use of that area  
15 will continue to grow.

16       Not too long ago, a high-voltage power  
17 cable was damaged in that area as an act of apparent  
18 vandalism. Had that cable been active, had it had  
19 voltage running through it, the chances are that it  
20 would have generated a fire and probably injured the  
21 perpetrator.

22           It draws attention to two of our concerns.  
23 Safety and security. We worked hard to ensure that  
24 the activities that we have out there are managed  
25 with safety in mind. But as the cable incident



1 indicates, and as our activities in the area  
2 increase, it indicates to us that we must improve  
3 our controls to ensure the public safety. Some sort  
4 offense or boundary in that area will help us do  
5 that.

6       Secondly, the cable incident and changes  
7 in the world since 9/11 have also drawn attention to  
8 the need for added precautions, not just to ensure  
9 our one-of-a-kind capabilities, but also to protect  
10 our high-value assets, to make sure they're properly  
11 protected and security is maintained or enhanced.  
12 And again, that fence or a boundary will help us do  
13 that.

14       Protecting facilities and the valuable  
15 research that our people do there also protects your  
16 investment in national defense. It ensures that all  
17 our tax dollars are being used most efficiently.  
18 With that, I thank you for your time.

19       MR. MILLIGAN: Okay. Now I'd like to  
20 introduce Major Dirk Johnson with the 58th Special  
21 Operations Wing.

22           MAJOR JOHNSON: Good evening. This is  
23 kind of a different situation for me, and I don't  
24 get to participate in this type of activity too  
25 often, so it's kind of different.

1 I'm here to tell you a little bit about  
2 what the 58th Special Operations Wing does in this  
3 particular area. The 58th Special Operations Wing's  
4 primary mission is to train all Air Force special  
5 operators. In other words, our primary mission is  
6 to train all the Air Force Special Operations that  
7 goes on and are going to go on in the future.

8 Also, it's the only place that we do our  
9 training in the whole Air Force, so all initial Air  
10 Force helicopter training takes place here at  
11 Kirtland Air Force Base, as well as the pararescue  
12 men that you briefly touched on earlier. This is  
13 the only base that they do their initial training  
14 at, as well. So this is an essential base for our  
15 mission as special operators.

16 Our primary mission is to train new  
17 copilots, to train new air crew in Special  
18 Operations, flying to do all those different things  
19 during day- and nighttime operations. So it is  
20 mission essential that we have these areas open to  
21 our usage. Primarily we use them as air landing

22 zone facilities for helicopter training. Also,  
23 we're the only base that does high-altitude  
24 training, so it is essential for us to train at the  
25 high altitudes, as over the past few years you have

1 seen our high-altitude usage has come into play. As  
2 well as all those crews who are participating in  
3 those high altitudes have done their training here  
4 at Kirtland Air Force Base, which enforces the need  
5 for our training at those particular altitudes.

6       A lot of times people wonder why we have  
7 to have that type of training. Well, this is the  
8 only Air Force facility that we can train at those  
9 places. All the environmental assessments have  
10 already been done on those locations. Therefore, in  
11 order for us to facilitate our training, we would  
12 have to go elsewhere for those type of particular  
13 LZs which would increase the area that we would  
14 operate out of, again, which would further cost you  
15 guys more land usage, basically. We'd have to use  
16 other areas.

17       Primarily our biggest operation here is to  
18 train new students. As such, we also have other  
19 helicopter agencies that come and train for other  
20 high altitude operations. Other facilities that  
21 have been used, other agencies, Army as well as

22 other Air Force squadrons out there -- they come

23 here to do their high altitude training.

24       As a safety concern for us, we go into

25 those LZs at nighttime, we go there during the day.

1 Basically at nighttime we are not going to be able  
2 to see people in those areas if they are there. The  
3 only way we can see people is if they have some type  
4 of IR chem light or another type of light that's  
5 going to be on them that we can see with our  
6 night-vision goggles. But primarily we're concerned  
7 with your safety. You don't want a 55,000-pound  
8 helicopter landing on you. It might put a damper in  
9 your ability to still bike, do hiking. I personally  
10 enjoy biking and hiking, as well. So we just don't  
11 want that to happen.

12       At the same time, we need these LZs in  
13 order to operate, in order to make sure that our  
14 mission of the United States Air Force is completed  
15 and accomplished. And that's all I have to say.

16       MR. MILLIGAN: We're going to take a real  
17 quick break. We'll try and keep it as quick as  
18 possible. Try to make it about five minutes or so,  
19 and make a quick run to the bathroom, if you need  
20 to. If you want to look at the posters, ask  
21 questions, do that, and come back.

22 (A recess was taken.)

23 MR. MILLIGAN: Let's get started, or I'm  
24 going to do impressions and I don't think you want  
25 that to happen.



1 I'll turn this over to Gary Gilliland with  
2 Friends of Otero, and we have a long list of folks  
3 who want to speak. Keep it to five minutes. If you  
4 go that long, I'll give you one minute to wrap up  
5 before we get the five-minute point, and we will  
6 press on. If you don't have five minutes, great.

7 MR. GILLILAND: Thank you. My name is  
8 Gary Gilliland. Thank you, everybody, for showing  
9 up.

10 I live in the east mountains. I'm a  
11 mountain biker and I'm a hiker. I use the Otero  
12 Canyon trail system weekly. I walk my dogs out  
13 there, and I truly enjoy living in Albuquerque, and  
14 I'm thankful that we have access to such beautiful  
15 land to enjoy our sport. Thank you.

16 I'd like to start out this presentation  
17 with a quote from the environmental assessment. It  
18 states "I have concluded that the proposed action  
19 would not have a significant impact on the quality  
20 of the human environment and would not generate  
21 significant controversy."

22           How many people out there, with a show of  
23 hands, feel that this fence in this proposed  
24 location would have a significant impact and would  
25 generate significant controversy?

1 SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: Hear ye, hear ye.

2 MR. GILLILAND: Did you count? Okay.

3 Thank you.

4 Friends of Otero are prepared to  
5 demonstrate that the conclusions of the EA did not  
6 adequately address the impact of the proposed  
7 permanent fence, that putting up a fence in the  
8 proposed location by the Department of Defense would  
9 have a significant impact on the quality of life  
10 here, and that the proposed location of the fence  
11 would generate significant controversy.

12 The Otero Canyon area. I don't think I  
13 have to explain to you too much about how popular  
14 that trail is to us. Just look at how many people  
15 have come out here tonight. It is a nationally  
16 recognized trail system with miles of world-class  
17 single-track trails.

18 I moved here from Tennessee four years  
19 ago. I used to take vacations out here and when I  
20 came out here, the bike shops, the trail guides,  
21 even the Forest Service, would point over there,

22 say, "Go ride Otero Canyon." It is featured in  
23 Outdoor Magazine's trail guides, on-line recreation  
24 resources, and it has often been called "the gym."  
25 In October 2000, Bike Magazine featured

1 the Otero Canyon trail system and other trails in  
2 the Albuquerque area enticing people to come down  
3 here to ride. The Otero Canyon trail system is also  
4 featured in two books. One is The Mountain Biker's  
5 Guide to New Mexico, which is a national trail guide  
6 book. Another one is A Mountain Biking Guide of  
7 Albuquerque, which I'm sure we all have.

8       It is also featured in local maps, bike  
9 shops, including if you go to the Forest Service,  
10 the ranger stations out here, they'll point you to  
11 the Otero Canyon trail system.

12       One of the things that the EA failed to  
13 address was the economic impact of closing such a  
14 beautiful trail. Let's take, for instance, the  
15 village of Tijeras. Tijeras is at the crossroads or  
16 is often called the gateway to Otero Canyon. It  
17 lies at I-40 and 14. It's a small town. It doesn't  
18 have a lot of business, and the business it does  
19 have is depends on the people like us who pass  
20 through it.

21       Recently Tijeras approved development of a

22 gas station, a fast-food restaurant, and other  
23 businesses along that intersection. We approached  
24 the village of Tijeras, they passed a resolution in  
25 support of an alternative location for the fence so

1 that the public will still have access to that  
2 location.

3 In addition, there are more than 25 bike  
4 retailers in the Albuquerque area, and 40 outdoor  
5 recreation retailers. Many of these are small  
6 businesses. Small businesses depend on people like  
7 us to buy bikes, parts, and service. If we were to  
8 lose the Otero Canyon trail system it would have a  
9 significant impact on those businesses.

10 I'm sure you have seen this before. We  
11 want to make it clear that we are not opposed to a  
12 fence. We are opposed to the location of the fence.  
13 We have gone as far as coming up with an alternative  
14 plan that we feel will enable Kirtland and the  
15 Department of Energy to meet its security needs, yet  
16 still provide access to the public for the Otero  
17 Canyon area.

18 Recently Heather Wilson issued a public  
19 statement in support of our cause. Here's a quote.  
20 "Wilson expressed to base officials her relief that  
21 an alternative plan, presented by a coalition of

22 hikers, cyclists, horseback riders and others" --  
23 that's us -- "who utilized the nature area should be  
24 seriously considered. Wilson thinks the issue is  
25 not a zero-sum game, and that the base's security



1 needs could be met, while still allowing access to  
2 trails in the area."

3       So this will take compromise. Thank you.

4       MR. GUNN: My name is Scott Gunn with  
5 Friends of Otero Canyon. Thank you. I started the  
6 Save Otero Canyon web site about two months ago.  
7 Since this time, through paper petitions and an  
8 on-line petition we have collected over 3,000  
9 signatures. A discussion forum exists on my web  
10 site and the saveotero.org has received over 30,000  
11 page hits from around the country. On my poll on  
12 the web site at this time, just over 500 people  
13 indicates that about 100 people visit the Otero  
14 Canyon area two or more times per week.

15       Every day I receive approximately 20  
16 e-mails from concerned trail users around the  
17 country. Many people have mentioned that they will  
18 no longer have a reason to visit Albuquerque if  
19 Otero Canyon is closed. Many mention that Otero  
20 being so close to Albuquerque is the most frequent  
21 recreational area visited by them.

22        Even DOD personnel at Kirtland Air Force  
23 Base who visit the trail to hike or bike have signed  
24 the petition -- obviously, this trail is widely  
25 known and liked among all trail users groups --

1 during the past two months, through the efforts of  
2 most of the people in this room tonight.

3 Congresswoman Heather Wilson has publicly  
4 expressed her support for a mutually agreeable fence  
5 line. She has also expressed her support, as Gary  
6 mentioned, for the alternative proposal that Friends  
7 of Otero Canyon will present before you tonight.

8 Also, as Gary mentioned, the village of  
9 Tijeras passed a resolution supporting us, and the  
10 City of Albuquerque is also discussing a resolution  
11 in support of us, as well. We have received vocal  
12 and written comments from many Albuquerque and local  
13 businesses in support of keeping recreational access  
14 open to Otero Canyon.

15 Our effort has been covered numerous times  
16 by local press and national organizations such as  
17 the International Mountain Biking Association, and  
18 local organizations such as Trail Partners, Bicycle  
19 Coalition in New Mexico, and many others have become  
20 involved in the effort to maintain recreational  
21 access to Otero Canyon.

22        There's that favorite quote of ours again.

23 We believe that the events of the past two months

24 and your presence in the room tonight are evidence

25 that the fencing of Otero Canyon will have a large

1 significant impact on the human environment and has  
2 already generated significant controversy. Thanks.

3 MR. TURGEON: I feel like I just followed  
4 Elvis. My name is Matt Turgeon. I live in  
5 Albuquerque, New Mexico. I bike and hike the Otero  
6 Canyon trail network three times a week. I'm here  
7 to discuss tonight some concerns that I have over  
8 this environmental assessment.

9 Specifically I'm just really concerned  
10 over the qualifications of the folks that have  
11 developed this. I didn't see anybody that was a  
12 registered professional environmental engineer in  
13 the state of New Mexico. They are available. UNM  
14 has a program. There are several registered  
15 professional engineers in the state. They are more  
16 than qualified to do this.

17 I was concerned why the LopezGarcia Group  
18 did not bring a professional engineer to this.  
19 Mr. Moore, I understand your background is in  
20 zoology. That's kind of related to fencing and  
21 animals, isn't it? Thank you.

22           My next concern has to do with this whole  
23 issue of unexploded ordnance. What is unexploded  
24 ordinance, and where is it? Straight from the  
25 document, page 4-24, "At the proximity fuse test

1 range, this describes the type of ordnance that is  
2 out there. Five-inch shells, 75-millimeter  
3 ballistic shells, 105- and 155-millimeter dummy and  
4 high-explosive rounds, five-inch rockets, assisted  
5 projectiles and fuses, many of which still may be  
6 alive."

7       This is kind of different than what we  
8 heard tonight. I'm glad we got some more  
9 information and we have some clarification on where  
10 these sites are at. We do appreciate that.

11       Again, the ordnance has been identified at  
12 the proximity fuse test range. This is not Otero  
13 Canyon, though. And one of the things I do want to  
14 make clear, we hear the term "exploded ordnance."  
15 But I'm concerned about the use of that phrase.  
16 There is ordnance out there. It may be exploded  
17 ordnance. It may be debris. It may even be trash.  
18 We have no guarantees. Is the ordnance truly  
19 unexploded?

20       To back up my claim for this, I'm going  
21 the use some of the words straight from the

22 environmental assessment. Page 3-51. "Kirtland Air  
23 Force Base is awaiting funding to investigate the  
24 ranges for the presence of UXO and possible soil and  
25 groundwater contamination."



1       Page 3-53 basically says the same thing.  
2       The solution to UXO is to fence it off.  
3       That really doesn't sound right now, does it? We  
4       just read their own words that said this can  
5       contaminate our soil and groundwater. I'm concerned  
6       about some of the Special Operations and training  
7       situations that go on out there. I am concerned  
8       about base employees. Are we going to leave this  
9       stuff out on base to expose the employees?  
10       I'm also concerned about why haven't we  
11       heard about this issue until just recently? Why are  
12       there no signs? I have heard some feedback on that  
13       about signs, as well. I have heard that citizens  
14       are tearing those signs down. I find that  
15       laughable. I have seen those DOE signs up there for  
16       years. I have never seen anybody take those down.  
17       I know nothing about the DOD signs. I have never  
18       seen them, and I know many of you haven't, either.  
19       The next concern I have has to do with the  
20       gray vireo. This is a bird that is on the state  
21       threatened species and it's known to occur within

22 the withdrawal area. During the summer -- and this  
23 is straight from the EA -- during the summer, the  
24 withdrawal area has the largest gray vireo colony in  
25 New Mexico.

1       Page 3-31. "The gray vireo are in the  
2 withdrawal area, primarily in the pinon-juniper  
3 zone." I think many of you will agree that the  
4 trails exist in the pinon-juniper zones.

5       Again, straight from the document, "The  
6 state threatened gray vireo has been observed in the  
7 pinon-juniper community in the withdrawal area,  
8 which the proposed action would transect. However,  
9 the gray vireo is not known or expected to occupy  
10 the pinon-juniper community impacted by the proposed  
11 action due to strict requirements."

12       How do you communicate this to a bird? Is  
13 it one flap or two?

14       And again, our favorite quote. Thank you.

15       MR. CHERRY: Hi. My name is Brian Cherry.  
16 I live in Albuquerque. I moved here two years ago.  
17 I had two jobs that I could decide between, one here  
18 and one in Washington D.C. When I got off the  
19 plane, I drove my rental car to Otero Canyon, saw  
20 that place, and decided to live here.

21       I want to talk specifically about some of

22 the issues, the concerns we have. They asked us to  
23 read these documents. I have done it. Twice. And  
24 there are a few issues. Mainly it deals with the  
25 perspective of the document. The document is very

1 good at talking about the impact to the Air Force  
2 base. They forget and they make no mention of the  
3 impact to the people.

4 Earlier we had a presentation about some  
5 of the high-dollar facilities in the withdrawal  
6 area. Those facilities are far away on the western  
7 edge of the withdrawal area, and do not pose any  
8 implication to putting a fence that would allow the  
9 public access to the trail system in any way. In  
10 fact, the Starfire range, to my knowledge, is not  
11 even in the withdrawal area. It's on base.

12 So again, we're going to quote their  
13 document. On page 5-9, "In general, land use  
14 impacts would be considered significant if they  
15 would, one, be inconsistent or noncompliant with  
16 applicable land use plans and policies; two, prevent  
17 continued use or occupation of an area; and three,  
18 be incompatible with adjacent or nearby land use to  
19 the extent that public health or safety is  
20 threatened."

21 Yes, there are issues to public health and

22 safety. However, the document fails to recognize  
23 that the public is using the area and has been using  
24 the area for 70 years. Obviously, this is a direct  
25 violation of their own terms for what is an impact.

1 Another criterion for their sources of  
2 impact is what will happen to the water, according  
3 to this. Yes, building a fence will have a  
4 localized effect on things, but not that  
5 significant. However what is significant is where  
6 this land is located, and what's being done on this  
7 land.

8 As all of you know, our only potable water  
9 source is the Santa Fe aquifer. That's located  
10 under Kirtland Air Force Base in the city. The EA,  
11 if we read about this aquifer, tells us that the  
12 only recharge of the Santa Fe aquifer is most likely  
13 to occur east of the installation which is Kirtland  
14 Air Force Base, in the Manzanita Mountains where  
15 sediments favor rapid infiltration. We're talking  
16 about the Otero Canyon area and the Cibola National  
17 Forest.

18 There is one other place where water can  
19 recharge, but unfortunately, we repaved over that to  
20 live. So Albuquerque depends on the water. By  
21 returning a portion of this land, this allows the

22 Air Force to make a very constructive move towards  
23 environmental protection and welfare for the city,  
24 which Kirtland Air Force Base depends on for  
25 survival.



1           Another one of their specific sources of  
2 impact is visual resources. They define a  
3 recreational area as a highly sensitive impact --  
4 highly sensitive area. They also define visual  
5 sensitivity as the degree of public interest in  
6 visual resources and concern over adverse changes in  
7 the quality of that resource. We all agree that  
8 putting a fence across Otero Canyon will severely  
9 impact our enjoyment of the visual resource that is  
10 Otero Canyon.

11           The EA only describes impact on the visual  
12 resources from the perspective of the base. It's  
13 convenient for them because there's a mountain range  
14 between the base and the fence. They'll never see  
15 it. However, the public use the area that is the  
16 fence. Putting a fence along -- making no  
17 consideration for topologic concerns, across ridge  
18 lines and bisecting a major recreational area will  
19 have a significant and major impact.

20           And finally, I'd like to end with our  
21 quote again, which I just stated. Obviously, there

22 are many reasons why the EA fails to address impacts

23 of the public because the perspective of the

24 document is solely from the perspective of the Air

25 Force and DOD and fails to take all of your views

1 into consideration. Thank you.

2 DR. JENSEN: Hello. My name is Craig  
3 Jensen and I'm a physician at the University of New  
4 Mexico, a native New Mexican, and I plan to spend my  
5 practice career in New Mexico and the Albuquerque  
6 area.

7 I'm here to support the Friends of Otero  
8 in our mission to preserve the Otero Canyon trail  
9 system through an exceptionally thoughtful  
10 alternative fencing proposal. I want to take a  
11 moment to thank the Albuquerque City Council and the  
12 Village of Tijeras Council and Congresswoman Heather  
13 Wilson and her representative Carri Phillis for  
14 their support on this issue.

15 The alternative fencing proposal put forth  
16 ensures the agreed-upon essential national security  
17 needs of Kirtland Air Force Base while maintaining  
18 the trail system for use by the community.

19 The benefits of maintaining this unique  
20 natural resource are myriad. The essential benefits  
21 gained by maintaining the Otero Canyon trail system

22 and ignored by the recent impact assessment issued

23 by the Air Force, include but are not limited to

24 both physical and mental health.

25 I have enjoyed Otero Canyon for the last

1 11-plus years as an outlet for exercise and the  
2 relief of stress and anxiety of everyday life which  
3 we all share. Otero Canyon has been preserved  
4 throughout this time as a relatively pristine area,  
5 free of the danger and destruction of motorized  
6 vehicles. In the midst of an epidemic of obesity  
7 and inactivity and all the associated social and  
8 health-related costs, actions such as this that  
9 thoughtlessly reduce the outlets for physical  
10 activity should be strongly scrutinized.

11       An example of the costs associated with  
12 obesity is provided not only by the first national  
13 health and examination survey follow-up in the  
14 mid-1980s, but also the Mr. Fit trial and the  
15 Canadian health study. These studies all illustrate  
16 that low levels of activity are strongly associated  
17 with significant weight gain, and it is now widely  
18 known that this weight gain predisposes people to  
19 numerous adverse health effects, including premature  
20 death, cardiovascular disease, including strokes,  
21 heart failure, and heart attacks; diabetes, high

- 22 blood pressure; increased risk of colon, prostate,
- 23 and rectal cancer in men; increased risk of
- 24 gallbladder, endometrial, and breast cancer in
- 25 women; arthritis, immobility, depression, anxiety

1 and poor psychosocial functioning, elevated

2 cholesterol levels, and respiratory disorders

3 including sleep apnea.

4       The trickle-down effects of maintaining

5 public access to natural resources such as the Otero

6 Canyon area are numerous. While it is difficult to

7 estimate how much money society would save by small

8 reductions in the prevalence of obesity, it is even

9 more difficult to quantify, much less qualify, the

10 impact of increased environmental sensitivity

11 learned by current and future generations through

12 their use of these trails.

13       Because I have chosen to speak regarding

14 public health, I feel obligated to make just a

15 couple of unplanned comments additionally.

16 Unexploded ordnance have never been found in the

17 Otero Canyon area. Human injury has not occurred,

18 and the thought that this risk has only now

19 materialized is suspect. The fact that we have used

20 this trail without incident for 70 years now

21 certainly argues against significant human danger.

22        In short, the current proposal results in  
23 a dramatic loss of long enjoyed well-preserved  
24 trails at a very high cost, while the alternative  
25 fencing proposal put forth by Friends of Otero



1 maintains them while importantly preserving the  
2 security needs of Kirtland Air Force Base without  
3 significantly impacting their function.

4       Let the resolution of this conflict of  
5 ideas act as a marker of our community's faculty in  
6 identifying and rectifying issues which involve both  
7 Albuquerque and our neighbor, Kirtland Air Force  
8 Base.

9       If, incomprehensibly, the proposed fencing  
10 is pushed forward in its current form, I recommend a  
11 repeat impact assessment to address the impact not  
12 only on the health effects of the community, but on  
13 the health impact on minority populations in the  
14 area, as it is also known that obesity afflicts  
15 minorities disproportionately. As a member of the  
16 Friends of Otero and a representative of the health  
17 care community of Albuquerque, I encourage the  
18 adoption of this thoughtful compromise. I counter  
19 that the proposed action would have an impact on the  
20 human environment so vast that it's difficult to  
21 measure, which is just shy of the amount of

22 controversy that it has and will continue to

23 generate. Thank you.

24 MS. TURGEON: Good evening. My name is

25 Jeni Turgeon. I am a mountain biker and hiker in

1 the Otero Canyon trail system. I enjoy this trail  
2 system very much. In fact, I'm on that trail at  
3 least once a week, if not more.

4       So far what you have heard is just a brief  
5 summary of some of the key highlights that we as  
6 Friends of Otero have identified in the  
7 environmental assessment as being very important.  
8 Within our alternative proposal we have a much more  
9 detailed listing of the problems that we have found.

10       In addition to that listing of issues with  
11 the environmental assessment, we have also included  
12 an alternative proposal for our fence line. That is  
13 accessible on [www.saveotero.org](http://www.saveotero.org) as well as the topo  
14 map over here that you all will be able to take a  
15 look at later on this evening.

16       I want to set some ground rules here,  
17 first of all. We're not opposed to a fence line at  
18 all. We understand the need for a fence line for  
19 Kirtland Air Force Base, and an identified area for  
20 security. We're asking Kirtland Air Force Base to  
21 negotiate with the public to determine a mutually

22 agreeable alternate fence line. That's what we're

23 looking for.

24 In response to the issue of the Special

25 Operations area, I'm sure there's a way for us to

1 mutually work out some sort of use there, and I'm  
2 sure that there's a precedent for such activity. I  
3 would like to see the frequency of use for the  
4 Special Operations in that area, since I have been  
5 out there numerous times and have never seen or  
6 heard of any instance of that ever.

7       The May 2003 EAS does not properly address  
8 the significant environmental impact of the current  
9 proposed fence line. That's our issue right now.  
10 It lacks true alternatives. This May 2003 document  
11 gives us two. We have a fence, we don't have a  
12 fence. Which is interesting. I wasn't going to  
13 bring up the December 2002 proposal draft EA.  
14 However, Mr. Moore did mention that, so I think I  
15 will bring that up.

16       In that December 2002 proposal they do  
17 have five different alternative proposals in there  
18 that were eliminated very quickly in the May 2003  
19 draft. So already the public has missed out on that  
20 other December 2002 draft. Our proposal is in a  
21 sense the May 2003 alternative 3 proposal. In fact,

- 22 if you look on the map right here, the red is our
- 23 Friends of Otero proposed fence line. This is
- 24 alternate 3. Actually, we give a little more land.
- 25 Alternate 3 follows right along here. The Arroyo

1 del Coyote, that line up there. What we're doing is  
2 we're providing DOD and DOE additional land with our  
3 alternative proposal for them to continue some of  
4 their Special Operations.

5 Our proposed fence line is cost-effective.  
6 What we have done is we've followed an existing  
7 Forest Service Road. In fact, we even recommend  
8 that that Forest Service road stay within the fence  
9 line, which allows Kirtland Air Force Base easier  
10 access and patrol of that area.

11 As the taxpayer cost is a big deal to me,  
12 with Kirtland's proposed fence line, we're going all  
13 over the place. We're going over canyons, down  
14 ravines, up rocky cliffs, all around, areas where  
15 there are no fences. We're going to have to have  
16 clear-cutting in order to get that done. That's a  
17 lot of money to get that finished.

18 That's why we have come up with a proposal  
19 to save money by following an existing Forest  
20 Service road. That saved money could probably help  
21 us to go in there and remove some of that supposed

22 unexploded ordnance that exists in the area.

23        Since we've been touching on this EA, a

24 couple of things I do want to address. Page 1-4 in

25 the EA. This is one of the reasons for Kirtland's



1 placement of the proposed fence line. The new  
2 fencing is necessary to meet anti-terrorism force  
3 protection requirements.

4       Let me tell you that our alternative  
5 proposal allows for this to happen in a  
6 cost-effective way, as we've already mentioned.  
7 Again, Kirtland's proposal totally disregards the  
8 existing roads. It requires unneeded construction,  
9 time, and taxpayer dollars.

10       In addition, if we continue to have our  
11 other alternate proposal that we had up here before,  
12 we're going to have the additional watchful eye of  
13 citizens out there along that Kirtland fence line  
14 area. What a great way to protect something that's  
15 very important to all of us.

16       Another section of page 1-4. Another  
17 reason for Kirtland's alternate proposal.  
18 "Uncontested access by unauthorized personnel could  
19 jeopardize missions on base and endanger civilians  
20 who unknowingly cross base boundaries."

21       We know from a USGS stamp dated 1934 that

22 responsible trail users have been using this area  
23 for at least 70 years. The US Forest Service does  
24 not have a record of a single incident involving UXO  
25 in the withdrawal area. Also, no documented events

1 of jeopardized missions or endangered civilians have  
2 been presented to us, although we've requested that.  
3 So the issue once again is: Is this really an  
4 issue?

5       Then on the same page, another issue,  
6 uncontested access, same issue, uncontested access  
7 by unauthorized personnel could jeopardize the  
8 missions on base and endanger innocent civilians.  
9 Our proposed boundary keeps environmentally unsafe  
10 areas such as the Lurance Canyon burn area, within  
11 the KAFB boundary. So we are looking out for human  
12 welfare here.

13       Our proposed boundary keeps the forest  
14 roads within the fence line so thus we are saving  
15 money here.

16       Finally, we definitely think that that  
17 money could be used better by removing unexploded  
18 ordnance and creating better trails for the public.

19       And finally, our favorite quote, one last  
20 time, just because I'm anxious to see hands of  
21 everybody who believes that there is a significant

22 impact to our human environment.

23       I wish Cynthia Gooch were here tonight

24 because I'd like to ask her how on earth she was

25 able to come up with that justification and the

1 resulting since FONSI, the finding of no significant  
2 impact. Thank you.

3 MR. MILLIGAN: Sandra Knox?

4 MS. KNOX: Hi. My name is Sandra Knox,  
5 and I'm a health care professional and a small  
6 business owner who's lived in New Mexico for about  
7 ten years. I'd like to point out a few items that  
8 either have been omitted from Kirtland Air Force  
9 Base's environmental assessment regarding Otero  
10 Canyon or are an incorrect assessment of the issue.

11 In addition to the points that have been  
12 previously discussed, I'm also very concerned that  
13 the environmental assessment completely disregards  
14 the issue of wild fire and fire control within the  
15 proposed closure area. I'd like to know if the base  
16 has specially trained personnel that are required to  
17 fight fires in the remote canyon areas around Otero.  
18 Also, do they have the resources and equipment to  
19 fight a devastating fire that would not only burn  
20 behind their proposed fence, but also on to Forest  
21 Service land and subsequently to the homes in the

22 east mountain area?

23       The Forest Service has spent many

24 man-hours and many of our tax dollars doing

25 controlled burns, brush gathering, and forest

1 thinning in the Otero Canyon area to prevent a  
2 catastrophic fire such as the Mt. Lemon fire that's  
3 going on in Arizona right now. How is the base  
4 planning to continue this prevention and control,  
5 and why wasn't this issue addressed in the  
6 environmental assessment?

7       Another issue that was never addressed in  
8 the environmental impact assessment is the bark  
9 beetle problem. And although I'm not an  
10 entomologist, it is my understanding you can't  
11 control bark beetle infestation in one small area  
12 unless the areas around it are also being treated  
13 and prophylactic measures are being taken.

14       Why wasn't this important issue addressed  
15 in the environmental impact assessment, and what  
16 measures will the base take behind this proposed  
17 fence line to keep bark beetles from further  
18 devastating our forest? A full environmental study  
19 should be conducted based on just the wild fire and  
20 bark beetle issues alone, not even mentioning all  
21 the issues that the Save Otero group has already

22 discussed.

23 I'm further upset that in the initial

24 notice given for public comment, the notice told

25 people either to comment via the phone or the



1 Internet to a subcontractor employee of the base.  
2 When we called to comment, we were told that we  
3 could only comment via e-mail, and I personally know  
4 individuals who use the Otero Canyon regularly who  
5 are in this room tonight who don't have access to  
6 e-mail and were unable to voice their opposition to  
7 this proposed fence. It's estimated only about 60  
8 percent of New Mexicans have Internet access. So  
9 was the base trying to exclude all these other 40  
10 percent's voice from being heard?

11       On a personal note, I find it ludicrous  
12 that the environmental impact assessment would say  
13 that the proposed fence line would not have a  
14 significant impact. For the past ten years, I have  
15 used the Otero Canyon trails approximately twice a  
16 week. The closure of these trails would have a  
17 significant negative impact on my quality of life.

18       During the past four weeks we've had over  
19 3,000 signatures gathered in protest of the proposed  
20 fencing of this canyon. Based on these figures, I  
21 would say that the controversy is significant. I

- 22 don't dispute the fact that Kirtland needs to build
- 23 a security fence. What I dispute is their
- 24 unwillingness to work with the community in building
- 25 that fence in a place that would be more

1 environmentally friendly, would be easier to patrol,  
2 would cost the taxpayers less money, and would allow  
3 the public to still enjoy and use this beautiful  
4 area. We've always been supportive of and good  
5 neighbors to Kirtland Air Force Base. Now it's time  
6 for the base to be a good neighbor to us. Please  
7 save Otero Canyon.

8 MR. MILLIGAN: Hugh Martin.

9 MR. MARTIN: Good evening. My name is  
10 Hugh Martin. I'm a physician citizen of Albuquerque  
11 and a friend of Otero Canyon. I'd like to address  
12 some of the socioeconomic impacts of the potential  
13 closure of Otero Canyon. As a physician, I also  
14 tend to share my colleague Dr. Jensen's point of  
15 view on the importance of health care in this  
16 country.

17 One of the particularly difficult aspects  
18 of achieving health care, as I think anybody in this  
19 room who has tried to receive health care either on  
20 an emergency or on an elective basis has  
21 encountered, is that there's a shortage of health

22 care providers, whether it's in the physician ranks,  
23 nursing, physical therapy, occupational therapy, et  
24 cetera. Our state, our community, is very limited  
25 right now with access to health care. This is only

1 going to get worse. It's a difficult state to

2 practice medicine in.

3       One of the things that keeps people here

4 is places like Otero Canyon. This place is a real

5 jewel. Ten years ago, my wife and I decided to move

6 out from the midwest. We looked around at a variety

7 of cities and communities with access to

8 universities: Denver, Seattle, Portland, Tucson,

9 and, last but not least of all, is Albuquerque.

10       We made a decision to move to Albuquerque.

11 One of the reasons that we decided to move here was

12 because we took a trip out. Each one of these

13 cities we looked around to, and looked around at the

14 available trail options that are easily accessible

15 from the cities. Albuquerque was one of the only

16 places where, 20 minutes from the city of

17 Albuquerque, you can be out on a single track for

18 hours and run into very few people.

19       This is a very important concept. This

20 usage of this area is only going to increase. The

21 city of Albuquerque, the state of New Mexico is

22 growing. That's the direction our political leaders  
23 are taking it, which means that as the city grows,  
24 the quality of life is even more important to  
25 maintain. The trail systems will become more

1 crowded and it's fairly important that we maximize  
2 current trail options. Otero Canyon is definitely a  
3 very valuable trail option. It must be preserved.

4 MR. MILLIGAN: Greg Smith.

5 MR. SMITH: Thank you. My name is Alfred  
6 G. Smith, but I go by Greg. I live in Rio Rancho,  
7 and I have lived in New Mexico for a large portion  
8 of my life, intermittently.

9 First of all, I'd like to say there's  
10 nothing that I'm going say tonight that hasn't been  
11 more eloquently said by the groups that have  
12 proceeded me and the individuals who have made their  
13 opinions known. Thank you for those. Those have  
14 been quite good.

15 In my experience as a member of several  
16 special weapons handling teams and my experience of  
17 development of the Tomahawk weapons system, I  
18 understand and appreciate the need to guarantee the  
19 security of our nation's defense assets.

20 Just a couple of comments I'd like to make  
21 concerning the Otero Canyon trail system. First, in

22 my opinion, the economic impact reviews

23 substantially underestimated the draw that Otero

24 Canyon has for visitors of the area. The IMBA

25 recently ranked Albuquerque as one of the top ten



1 cities in the mountain biking area. The reason for  
2 this was the closeness of fantastic trails as Otero  
3 Canyon to the city environment.

4       This is also a trail system that is  
5 recommended and, in fact, it is one of the ones  
6 that's insisted that people travel on when they come  
7 to visit Albuquerque. This is on magazines. This  
8 is on web sites across the nation. People come to  
9 Albuquerque specifically to ride the Otero Canyon  
10 trail.

11       I can name at least ten friends who have  
12 traveled from Texas, Arizona, and Colorado for that  
13 specific purpose, only to ride Otero Canyon. A  
14 group of about 40 mountain bikers will be coming in  
15 to New Mexico in August to experience mountain  
16 biking here. One of the rides being offered is  
17 Otero before we move up to Taos for higher  
18 elevations. Again, Otero is a specific trail for  
19 mountain biking in New Mexico.

20       My second point is more of a request. In  
21 reviewing this issue, I'd like to ask you to use

22 logic and reason to address all of the concerns  
23 surrounding the Otero Canyon trail system. The area  
24 has been used for many years and as has been  
25 identified, there has been no acknowledgment of any

1 public danger or incidence involving unexploded  
2 ordnance in that area. In fact, if I could borrow  
3 your figure 3.9 -- that's the one right there.  
4 There we go. This area here in the shaded area is  
5 already occupied by people. You have got your  
6 Special Operations training going on in that area  
7 where the claim for not allowing public access is  
8 unexploded ordnance. They're doing nighttime  
9 operations. Seems to me it would be very difficult  
10 to find some of this unexploded ordnance during the  
11 nighttime that doesn't have those little chem lights  
12 or flashlights on it.

13       So the general public concern is not that  
14 there shouldn't be a fence, but rather, the location  
15 of the fence. And as has been mentioned before, the  
16 community has supported Kirtland Air Force Base and  
17 will hopefully continue to support the Air Force  
18 base. Conversely, this process should consider the  
19 community.

20       In conclusion, I would ask that you  
21 consider the situation of Otero Canyon very

22 carefully, as you see by the petition and the  
23 comments offered tonight and the crowd, a little bit  
24 more than 20 people, I think. I didn't count  
25 exactly. It is an important part of the local

1 outdoor community. Your preservation of its use  
2 would be extremely appreciated by the community that  
3 uses it. Again, thank you for the opportunity to  
4 speak.

5 MR. MILLIGAN: Tom Fitzpatrick.

6 MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you, Steve. Good  
7 evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'm Lieutenant  
8 Colonel Tom Fitzpatrick, a retired Air Force public  
9 affairs officer and missile officer. I'm a current  
10 member of the Base Community Council at Whiteman Air  
11 Force Base Missouri, home of the B2 stealth bomber.  
12 A little plug for Missouri.

13 In Missouri, we have a common saying you  
14 may have heard before and that's called, "Show me."  
15 And in recent weeks I have been reviewing all the  
16 documentation available on Save Otero Canyon. I'll  
17 say right up front I'm pro Air Force, solidly pro  
18 Air Force, and solidly pro Friends of Otero Canyon.

19 Otero Canyon needs to be saved for both  
20 the Air Force and the public, and this can be done.  
21 I looked at the earlier ecosystem plan in 1996 that

22 was referred to. In that plan there was a whole  
23 paragraph referring to the series of public meetings  
24 that were held, the news releases that were sent  
25 out, the one-on-one individual conversations that

1 were held with individual people and small groups.

2       Tonight's meeting would not be possible  
3 without Carrie's boss, Congresswoman Heather Wilson.  
4 I think we all owe her a round of applause for  
5 bringing this out.

6       When I started reading the available  
7 material, I got to the point where I was concerned  
8 that there was very little evidence of outreach to  
9 the public. So I called the public affairs office  
10 here, and I didn't talk to Steve, but I talked to  
11 one of the representatives in the community  
12 relations area. I basically indicated verbally on  
13 the phone and on an e-mail message that based on  
14 what I had read to date, Kirtland Air Force Base was  
15 heading for a public relations community relations  
16 disaster. I didn't want to see that happen, and I  
17 know you don't want to see that happen, either. It  
18 doesn't help any one of us, doesn't help the  
19 country. We all see the need for a fence and as  
20 many people have said so far -- I won't repeat it at  
21 any great length -- a fence is needed, but it needs

22 to be in a better location.

23       Years back -- I won't tell you how long,

24 but quite a few years back -- when I started off as

25 a public affairs officer in the Air Force, we had a



1 DOD policy that still exists today, full disclosure  
2 with minimum delay. To translate that, that means  
3 in today's terms, today's issue, we need to be as  
4 proactive as possible, as members of the Air Force,  
5 as members of the public, and I think you all are  
6 doing that tonight by being here. I certainly  
7 appreciate that, and I know Steve does, as well.

8 But in this particular case, I'm not going  
9 to point fingers at people. That's kind of  
10 meaningless. But in this particular case I think  
11 the base has fallen short of being as outreaching as  
12 they could have been.

13 In looking at the environmental  
14 assessment, also the 1996 plan, I read all the news  
15 releases, the comments made by Matt Turgeon, Jeni  
16 Turgeon, and others in the group Save Otero Canyon.  
17 There are some things lacking there that just should  
18 have been there but weren't. So that's why I made  
19 the calls. That's why I considered coming down here  
20 from Missouri to take a look firsthand at what was  
21 going on.

22 I also, before I came down, shared my  
23 concerns with a colleague of Congressman Wilson, and  
24 that's my own home congressman, Ike Skeleton. Ike  
25 is on the Armed Services Committee, as well. And I

1 think he, if he were here tonight, would share our  
2 concerns along with Congresswoman Wilson that, yes,  
3 the Air Force needs the fence. Yes, the Air Force  
4 needs good base security.

5 I have to tell you on the side, I'm no  
6 security expert, but what I read in that EA was that  
7 there were two, I believe, 12-foot or 12-yard  
8 sections that are open to wildlife access. To me --  
9 and again, I'm no security expert so I won't belabor  
10 this -- but to me that kind of begs the question of  
11 security just a little bit. But I'll leave that  
12 alone.

13 You know, building a fence, constructing a  
14 fence, is not rocket science. Again, we support the  
15 need for a fence, but again, the location -- I keep  
16 coming back to the location. I haven't been able to  
17 figure out why somebody picked that particular  
18 location. As Jeni Turgeon put it, it goes over  
19 ravines, up mountainsides, down one side and down  
20 the other. It's a very difficult fence to build as  
21 they now propose. Following the ridge line to the

22 west would be far, far easier.

23 I'd like to conclude by recommending a

24 couple of things. At a minimum, number one, going

25 back to the drawing board and doing an environmental

1 impact study. And number two, adopting the fence  
2 location in the Save Otero group's alternate  
3 proposal that you saw tonight.

4       The last thing I'd like to say, a message  
5 to each and every one of you. You are here tonight,  
6 and I appreciate that and I know everybody does.  
7 But please be available and committed as you are now  
8 tonight next week, July 16th of this year, July 16th  
9 perhaps of next year. In other words, stay the  
10 course and keep up the comments, give them all the  
11 written feedback that you can, keep it reasonable,  
12 keep it positive. Thank you very much.

13       MR. MILLIGAN: Erik Peterson.

14       MR. PETERSON: Thank you for coming out.  
15 This is what democracy is all about. We need more  
16 of this in this country.

17       The military is supposed to protect our  
18 citizens, our land, and our ideals. In doing so, it  
19 is not their right to deny citizens access to our  
20 national forests, nor to restrict our freedoms so  
21 much that our American principles are no longer

22 enjoyed by our fellow citizens.

23       This desire to fence citizens out of one

24 of our local treasures is a blatant attempt to take

25 advantage of the current state of fear in America.

1 As FDR, one of our great leaders, said, "We have  
2 nothing to fear but fear itself."

3 I fear a government agency that is not  
4 responsive to the people it is supposed to serve.

5 MR. MILLIGAN: Eric Pinkerton.

6 MR. PINKERTON: Good evening. I'm Eric  
7 Pinkerton. I have nothing really prepared, but I  
8 have been riding Otero for a little over 20 years.

9 I have been all over that entire area, down into  
10 Bonita Canyon, south of the fire tower. You name  
11 it, I have been there. I have never ever seen  
12 anything remotely looking like unexploded ordnance.

13 I think that's just a chimera to kind of distract  
14 the issue. And even if there are some out there, it  
15 would be nice if we knew where it was, but also if  
16 you tend to look at the usage, trails by nature are  
17 corridors. People aren't fanning out over every  
18 square inch of that area. If you want to do an  
19 effective cost-effective sweep, sweep the corridor,  
20 and then let people know that as long as you're in  
21 this corridor you're safe, say, 20 yards outside

22 each trail. That would work.

23 Another random thought. I know why that

24 boundary, the proposed fence line, is where it is.

25 It's 106 degrees, two minutes west. They put a



1 ruler on a map, probably in the Washington D.C.

2 office back in 1943, and went, "That looks great."

3       The one we're proposing is -- I know this

4 is kind of a revolutionary concept -- but a

5 commonsense boundary. Kind of scary. Follow the

6 topography. Follow the existing roads. Because for

7 those that have read the EA, I believe there are

8 eight-foot-wide terraced wildlife pass-throughs.

9 And I don't think potential terrorists are going to

10 play by the rules. That means we've got an

11 inherently porous boundary, which means it needs to

12 be patrolled. And if you have got it alongside

13 existing roads, it's going to be a lot easier to

14 patrol.

15       That's about all I can think of. Thank

16 you very much.

17       MR. MILLIGAN: Daniel Gorman. Not here?

18 On to the next person. John Boyd.

19       MR. BOYD: Good evening. My name is John

20 Boyd, and I'm here representing the senior citizens

21 of Albuquerque. Every Tuesday and Thursday, every

22 week of the year, the senior citizens hike out  
23 somewhere in New Mexico. One of the favorite places  
24 is Otero Canyon. There are at least five trails,  
25 different loop trails, that we hike in Otero Canyon.

1 So far this year at the North Valley and Highland

2 Senior Center, we've done it three times this year.

3       The reasons we choose trails like Otero

4 Canyon is senior citizens do have limited resources.

5 We can't spend a lot of money traveling. We also

6 can't spend a lot of time traveling to distant

7 areas. We can only do day hikes. Otero Canyon,

8 being so close, then, is one of our favorite trails.

9       So I am really begging for Kirtland to

10 please take us into consideration. There are many

11 seniors living in this area and as I say, we do it

12 frequently, and there are 10 to 15 of us every time

13 we go out.

14       And now if the others will give me a

15 little bit of leniency, I would like to give up the

16 rest of my time to Mike Schrader from Albuquerque

17 Open Space, who unfortunately couldn't get here in

18 time to sign up, if that's okay with everybody.

19       MR. SCHRADER: Thank you John. Good

20 evening. As Mr. Gunn and Dr. Jensen alluded to, my

21 name is Matt Schrader, and I'm from the City of

22 Albuquerque Open Space Division. While this meeting  
23 is going on, across town at a City Council meeting  
24 there's a resolution that's being discussed and I  
25 anticipate it's probably going to be passed. It's

1 just a resolution, but basically, sort of to  
2 synopsise what it says, it directs the City to  
3 cooperate with Kirtland to develop this perimeter  
4 fencing proposal for Otero Canyon withdrawal to  
5 accommodate public and Kirtland Air Force Base.

6       It goes on, in the whereases, to  
7 acknowledge that Otero is among the best known, most  
8 popular recreational facilities in New Mexico for  
9 hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, dirt  
10 biking, and bird watching; that it's an  
11 indispensable recreational resource to the City of  
12 Albuquerque and to New Mexico, attracting thousands  
13 of visitors and tourists annually; that the trail  
14 system makes this area attractive to new businesses;  
15 and that the trail system enhances the quality of  
16 life for Albuquerque residents of all socioeconomic  
17 levels.

18       Now, it's also important to recognize and  
19 stress -- stresses and this is what I want to make  
20 sure we're keeping in mind -- the City of  
21 Albuquerque has a positive community relationship

22 with Kirtland Air Force Base, and this is important.

23 Mayor Martin Chavez has agreed to work with Air

24 Force Base Commander Kathleen Close to maintain an

25 open dialogue between the Air Force base and the

1 City, so they resolve that the City and Kirtland  
2 should work together to cooperatively develop a  
3 fencing proposal that allows continued public access  
4 to Otero Canyon to preserve the quality of life for  
5 present and future generations, and that the City of  
6 Albuquerque should seek commitment from Kirtland  
7 that no fencing decision would be made until all  
8 community comments have been heard. And this, to  
9 Kirtland's credit, is part of what is going on.

10       Now, I just want to end by noting the Open  
11 Space Division is in the business of providing for  
12 recreation while trying to protect resources and  
13 trying to protect the public's interest. This is a  
14 balancing act that our friends from the Forest  
15 Service do. This is a balancing act that federal  
16 agencies must do all the time. And it's not an easy  
17 one, but it's our calling as public servants.

18       In the words of one great American  
19 philosopher, "Can't we all get along," that there's  
20 plenty of room for compromise. And hopefully  
21 there's enough space in here to be able to achieve

22 everybody's interests.

23        Last year when the Open Space Division had

24 to initiate a closure of the Bosque, we trained

25 volunteers, and volunteers could not go down into



1 the Bosque unless they had a badge that said that  
2 they were trained. They helped us keep people who  
3 are unwanted out. And I'm saying this because I  
4 think that in the end, there's going to need to be a  
5 model that is a good public government model that  
6 all of this energy -- I wish that you all could come  
7 over and help me -- that all this energy in this  
8 room can go towards positive types of activity and  
9 help the base, help DOE, help DOD to achieve the  
10 common interest.

11       If you all can get an agreement together,  
12 a partnering agreement, a memorandum of  
13 understanding, some kind of cooperative agreement  
14 together, have people who are trained to help with  
15 security like has been pointed out, it is a workable  
16 model.

17       If that old saying is true, that good  
18 fences make good neighbors, then I hope we don't go  
19 and see what bad fences do. Thank you.

20       MR. MILLIGAN: John Red-Horse.

21       MR. RED-HORSE: My name is John Red-Horse.

22 I have lived in the south 14 area for a little bit  
23 over 14 years now, and during that time I have  
24 participated in recreational activities in the Otero  
25 and Bonito Canyon areas. All you guys have done a

1 great job bringing up things I never would have  
2 thought about, but I'm going to throw out a few  
3 things rather than reiterate some of the points you  
4 all made.

5       One of them is that the strict adherence  
6 to the northern boundary of the withdrawal land will  
7 landlock a fairly large section of national forest  
8 land. There's Carnuel, the land grant; there's some  
9 private land west of Carnuel; and there's the Rio  
10 Grande Cement mining claim. That area, if that  
11 fence line come there without compromise, will take  
12 out something like five square miles, or something  
13 like that, of possible trail area, land area. So  
14 I'm hoping you guys will at least think about that.  
15 We just need a corridor there as access to try and  
16 get back to that landlocked -- or that new  
17 landlocked spot.

18       A couple of other points I'd like to make  
19 is that in the City of Albuquerque or in Bernalillo  
20 County area, there are examples of civilian and  
21 military cooperation. It's my understanding -- I

22 don't really know all the technical details of  
23 that -- but apparently the military and Albuquerque  
24 share the runways for the airport. So somehow  
25 that's not a security risk. So certainly we can

1 figure out something on a lesser scale to make one  
2 here.

3       Finally -- well, not finally. I'm going  
4 to keep going for a minute. There are examples of  
5 parts of withdrawal lands throughout the history of  
6 the various public landowners where that land has  
7 actually been given back. For example, in the 1940s  
8 the Department of the Navy actually gave that. They  
9 said they didn't need it anymore. The war was over.  
10 Well, that's a pretty interesting concept.

11       Now, some people from Sandia Base came in  
12 at that time and they said, "Well, we'd like to have  
13 it for other reasons." It sort of evolved in its  
14 purpose.

15       But there's actually another example, as  
16 well, and that is back in the 1970s, I think it was,  
17 the military gave back Davis Canyon. I don't know  
18 about you guys, but that's a really beautiful area  
19 back there. And it's a fringe area, just like where  
20 all these trails are. Or most of them, at least.  
21 But anyway, the final thing I'd like to say is

22 that -- oh, I have lost track of myself. Okay.

23 Maybe that's all I'm going to say. Thanks.

24 MS. BOHN: My name is Juliette. I work

25 down at Fat Tire Cycles. I've lived in Albuquerque

1 off and on for over 20 years. I love our great  
2 natural resources that we have here in the state.  
3 We're very, very fortunate. I think that Kirtland  
4 and Albuquerque are one and the same community. All  
5 of us here probably have family and friends or do  
6 business with people related to Kirtland and the Air  
7 Force base. And it's part of our economy, it's part  
8 of our community.

9 I think that we have worked together in  
10 the past, as someone has stated, and I think that  
11 this -- I urge Kirtland not to make this your  
12 battle. There's many battles to be fought. There's  
13 that old Marine saying, "Is this the hill you want  
14 to die on?" All of us have to choose our battles in  
15 life. This is the far nether regions of this  
16 boundary that was created, you know, quite possibly  
17 in Washington on a longitudinal/latitudinal kind of  
18 line basing, but this is not the most important  
19 thing in the world. There's plenty of space there  
20 for Special Operations, which, by the way, even  
21 Albuquerque city is pretty much high altitude. So

22 going up in the mountains from there is also high  
23 altitude. So it's not like this is the only place  
24 in New Mexico where there's high-altitude training  
25 availability. This is a high-altitude state.



1        You know, I just want to encourage --  
2 they're always coming up with these base closings,  
3 things, and nobody wants to see Kirtland close. It  
4 is an integral part of our economy. This is true.  
5 So out of the community needs to step forward when  
6 new presidents come in and out and new initiatives  
7 start to close certain bases and close down Sandia  
8 operations, things like that.

9        You know, Kirtland and Albuquerque are  
10 going to need to work together to keep the base  
11 open, to keep that economy flowing, and to keep --  
12 you know, keep small businesses in business. That  
13 will mean that those people can spend their money in  
14 other small businesses in Albuquerque and that money  
15 is generated, nine, tenfold, over and over again.

16       So it's to everyone's benefit that we have  
17 a positive working relationship and that we can work  
18 for a mutually beneficial solution in regards to the  
19 Otero Canyon recreation area.

20       I'm going to leave you with this one final  
21 thought. After 9/11 there has been stepped up

22 security on all levels trying to detect terrorist  
23 plots. And undoubtedly, they have uncovered  
24 terrorist plots from within the United States.  
25 There are many disgruntled, frustrated individuals

1 out there. You know, we've seen people going  
2 postal, for example, people sending bombs in the  
3 mail, people doing horrible things internally. And  
4 I have to tell you that getting out and having an  
5 opportunity to recreate, to burn off that angst, to  
6 burn off that frustration, is going to have a  
7 positive effect on the entire community and our  
8 security from within.

9       So thank you all for your time and for  
10 coming out tonight.

11       MR. MILLIGAN: Victoria Yorton.

12       MS. YORTON: Thank you. You people are so  
13 passionate. It's wonderful to see that, your  
14 involvement not just here, tonight, but over the  
15 course of the last -- however long this has been  
16 going on, apparently for quite some time, since this  
17 land has been deeded, reclaimed, withdrawn, et  
18 cetera. It's good to see that passion. I encourage  
19 you all to continue that not just here tonight, but  
20 on and on. And not just on this issue. There's so  
21 many things to be involved in. And yes, this is

22 important, but is it where you want to lay all of

23 your energy?

24       Everyone has a vested interest in our

25 well-being, our emotional well-being, our physical

1 selves. And it's true, as one of the physicians  
2 pointed out, we are becoming a rapidly obese nation.  
3 And recreational activities are highly encouraged  
4 for one's health. But it's not just that. We have  
5 to look at everything. The American diet. We have  
6 to look at how blessed we are in this nation with so  
7 many resources. And yes, New Mexico has a volume of  
8 opportunities for recreational activity available.  
9 Not just Otero Canyon.

10 I was raised in northwestern Montana and I  
11 know the beautiful outdoors. This is a lovely part  
12 of the state. The entire state is lovely. And as  
13 was recently pointed out, it is high altitude, and  
14 has the opportunity to enjoy many different  
15 activities, events, et cetera, including the  
16 military applications.

17 I encourage everybody to remain  
18 passionate, to resolve this issue. It can be a  
19 win/win situation for everybody. Obviously, all of  
20 the alternatives have not been explored. Continue  
21 the discussion. Keep it open. Make it positive.

22 Keep it professional. And all of us will win. We  
23 have a very vested interest in it, but there's a  
24 little baby around here, there was earlier, and that  
25 child and his or her peers are going to have more

1 interest in this than any of us probably will ever  
2 be able to display.

3       And it's not just the health of the  
4 individual and that little child. But it is the  
5 entire nation of the security of the nation. Life  
6 is different now than it was a very short time ago.  
7 And it will continue to be challenging and we must  
8 meet all those needs. Thank you.

9       I'd like to cede the rest of my time to  
10 the next speaker. I believe it's Paul Souder.

11       MR. SOUDER: I am Paul Souder. I have  
12 lived in New Mexico for 47 years, in the east  
13 mountains all of that time. I'm a retired Sandia  
14 Lab engineer. I'm a ski bum on the Sandia Peak ski  
15 patrol. I'm a bicycle rider. I participate with  
16 Trail Partners. We go out and help the Forest  
17 Service build and maintain these trails. I try to  
18 be active in my community, doing things that I enjoy  
19 doing.

20       When my kids were growing up, and that was  
21 back in the 1970s, we had horses, and two of my

22 daughters were very active with their horses, and  
23 Otero Canyon is one of the places they rode.  
24 I have been riding my mountain bike for  
25 about 15 years. Otero Canyon is one of the places I



1 enjoy riding. To me, what makes it special, it's  
2 sort of a tough little canyon. It doesn't lend  
3 itself to ATVs. Our pristine places to ride bikes  
4 that used to be single-track -- many of them are now  
5 triple tracks. That means you got two tracks on the  
6 outside, and a pile of rocks in the middle where you  
7 used to ride. Otero Canyon is not that way, just  
8 because of the very nature of the access to it and  
9 the way the land lays. So it is a special place.

10       I support Gary Gilliland and his  
11 comments -- he was the first speaker. To me it was  
12 very logical, some of the things he talked about,  
13 the proposed alternative fence line. To me it's  
14 logical to have a fence. It's also logical to have  
15 a road near the fence where you can see it once in a  
16 while. Is it still there? Has somebody cut a hole  
17 in it? If you can't drive by it, it's not going to  
18 be looked at. Just not going to happen.

19       Anyway, seems to me logical to have a  
20 fence and to have it somewhere west of where it is,  
21 the straight lines, the notches, where it was drawn

22 sometime back in the 1940s. Thank you.

23 MR. MILLIGAN: Marley Cote.

24 MARLEY COTE: Hello. Good evening. My

25 name is Marley Cote. I work at Mountains and Rivers

1 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. I am a shop employee  
2 who sends many people up that way. It's a beautiful  
3 canyon. Many, many people enjoy it.

4 Gosh. Everyone said so many great things.

5 Great points, both positive and negative. I would  
6 also like to just add a few little comments on it.

7 You know, they talk about the funding of finding  
8 these UXOs, the unexploded ordnance. And yeah,  
9 there's no funding to look for them but yet there's  
10 a funding to build a 6.2 mile fence.

11 You take some of that time finding the  
12 money to fund the search and it will really, I  
13 think, have a much more positive effect on the Otero  
14 Canyon and all its users. You know, all the 70  
15 years that people have been using it, thousands and  
16 thousands of people per month, I would say, "Use  
17 that area."

18 There's not been a single instance that  
19 someone has been injured. And all the military that  
20 use it on a daily basis -- even though I have been  
21 up there twice a week for the last three years, I

22 have never seen a helicopter, anyone landing, anyone

23 doing anything up there. But as they say, they are

24 up there, and I believe them. It's on the map.

25       You know, Otero Canyon is a very extensive

1 trail system, and I see, just by closing them down,  
2 why would you force the construction of new trails  
3 to accommodate the thousands of trail users from the  
4 City of Albuquerque and its surrounding areas? I  
5 just don't understand closing off a perfectly useful  
6 trail system to have to build a new one in a forest  
7 that doesn't need to be treaded on anymore.

8 Families walk their children on a daily  
9 basis through that area, through Otero Canyon and  
10 the mesas surrounding it, for the last 70 years, but  
11 yet there still hasn't been an accident.

12 And is Kirtland Air Force Base being  
13 neglectful of this by allowing these people to hike  
14 in that area? I don't believe so. It's just that  
15 it's a time for them to build a fence and they feel  
16 that it's a time to say, "Oh, there's missiles and  
17 stuff out there that hasn't been blown up."

18 In fact, if there is, if there isn't, we  
19 won't know until we get some searchers out there  
20 looking for them. And where is that funding going  
21 to come from? Not from building a fence, but from

22 using the money elsewhere, looking for them.

23        Yeah. Everyone else has made such great

24 points. I don't know really what else to say.

25 Besides, I will continue to use the trail system and

1 it would be a very sorry sight to be able to -- or  
2 to go up there and see this seven-foot-high fence,  
3 you know, in the middle of a beautiful forest, and  
4 it may be that the trail system will not get used  
5 due to that fence. And even if the trail system --  
6 if they leave it intact and do not put a fence  
7 across, it won't get used, because I personally  
8 would not like to look at a seven-foot-high fence,  
9 in my opinion.

10       According to the fence, they allow  
11 eight-foot-wide little sections to allow animals and  
12 certain things to go through. In my outdoor shop I  
13 sell water purification systems. And in a simple  
14 system that filters microorganisms, viruses, Giardia  
15 and bacteria out of the water that you drink, a  
16 microscopic hole or crack could allow in a deadly  
17 virus that could kill you.

18       And that's exactly what this fence system  
19 is allowing: A big hole to be put right in it.  
20 It's for security. Yes, it is. I don't deny that  
21 we do need a fence. It is. It's just the placement

22 of it. It should allow the users to use it and to

23 keep respecting the Forest Service and the forest.

24 Yeah, I don't know. I guess keep on pushing on.

25 MR. MILLIGAN: Richard Becker.



1       MR. BECKER: Good evening. I'm Richard  
2 Becker. I'm president of the Albuquerque Wildlife  
3 Federation. I'm also past president of New Mexico  
4 Friends of the Forest. I'm going to have a little  
5 different take on this. I'm going to ask you to  
6 think with me about the whole question about  
7 vulnerability, living in the world that we do.

8       I'm a native New Mexican. I was born here  
9 in 1943. That makes me 59. I will be 60 years old  
10 in October. I grew up in the Albuquerque school  
11 district, the school system here. And I mention  
12 that because in the 1950s we grew up with bomb  
13 shelters. Bomb raids. And as a kid, most of us in  
14 Albuquerque heard all these rumors about -- it  
15 wasn't so much Kirtland then as it was Manzano --  
16 Manzano Army base. And there was a lot of  
17 speculation about what was being stored out there in  
18 terms of atomic weapons, hydrogen bombs, and so  
19 forth.

20       And then in about 1957, I think it was  
21 that year that the movie "On the Beach" came out.

22 Did any of you see that? Do you remember? What I'm  
23 saying is that many of the kids who are now adults  
24 who grew up in this town became very sensitized to  
25 the idea of threat. This was real. And I can

1 remember, after going to that movie, getting  
2 depressed and wondering, well, what the hell. Do I  
3 have a future? Am I going to be blown up, you know,  
4 in the next five years? Remember the cold war with  
5 the Soviet Union?

6       Since 9/11, my sense of vulnerability as a  
7 United States citizen here in this country and  
8 worldwide has changed. I have traveled the world.  
9 I have been many places and many countries. And I  
10 have to tell you, now that I look back on it, I  
11 realize, you know, there's places that I have been  
12 that I sure as hell wouldn't go now. I would not  
13 feel safe as an American.

14       I bring these issues out to you in this  
15 context because, as I have tried to understand what  
16 is being proposed here -- and I'm representing the  
17 Albuquerque Wildlife Federation, particularly in  
18 terms of wildlife issues -- but as many of us  
19 stated, you know, I think we all agree and  
20 understand the need for a real security fence, some  
21 kind of security arrangement. And I think that we

22 would agree that there needs to be some relocation

23 where it's been proposed and these different

24 alternatives.

25 But I raise the question of vulnerability.

1 And there was someone that made a comment about the  
2 wildlife barriers and kind of laughed. Well, it's  
3 not laughable. It's serious. The wildlife in this  
4 state or any state needs access to habitat, and  
5 everybody here, for the most part, is talking about  
6 the recreational point of view, and I accept that  
7 because I'm a recreationalist. I have used this  
8 place myself.

9 But I have had not heard one word of  
10 anybody up here to defend the needs of wildlife.  
11 Well, that's why I'm here. You know, when you look  
12 at the construction of the fence and the idea of  
13 having wildlife barriers, from a wildlife  
14 perspective that's certainly needed.

15 But what I'm raising is another issue,  
16 because I think the concept is flawed, in this  
17 sense. I can tell you, I don't care what kind of a  
18 fence you go out there and build with wildlife  
19 barriers or not.

20 Having grown up here with this constant  
21 threat that I live on a nuclear stockpile, here and

22 in Los Alamos, I'm not going to feel one bit more

23 secure against a terrorist threat knowing that

24 there's a seven-foot fence out there. It's not

25 enough. Okay?

1        Now, what I'm saying is, I don't think the  
2 proposal is enough in terms of our natural security.  
3 In the Albuquerque Journal this last week and today  
4 there was a reference to what they're doing at the  
5 Border Patrol. Now, they are spending millions of  
6 dollars to devise a video surveillance system. I  
7 have not heard one person suggest this. What I'm  
8 saying to you from my perspective as a lifelong  
9 native New Mexican, who's concerned about my  
10 survivability, my kids' survivability and my  
11 granddaughter's survivability, I want to see you  
12 construct a security device out there that I can  
13 have confidence in. And I'm no security expert, but  
14 to me, your fence is not enough. You're going to  
15 have to have video surveillance cameras. You're  
16 going to have to have patrols. The idea of having  
17 citizen involvement makes a lot of sense. Okay?

18        But I'm saying to you that I am not  
19 satisfied with the proposal from a vulnerability  
20 standpoint. I think ultimately, you know, we need  
21 to make our decisions, any of these decisions,

22 looking down the long haul.

23        Now, I was the first president of

24 New Mexico Friends of the Forest, which we

25 established about seven years ago, and I have been a



1 Forest Service volunteer for a long time. And  
2 again, I'm speaking for the wildlife community,  
3 because they can't be here to address you. The  
4 vireo or the robin or the mule deer or the coyote or  
5 the black bear. But if they were here, they would  
6 say, "Please remember that we share this place with  
7 you." Thanks.

8 MR. MILLIGAN: Steve McCampbell?

9 MR. McCAMPBELL: That's a long list of  
10 people, so I appreciate your time and patience. I'm  
11 Steve McCampbell, local business owner of Fat Tire  
12 Cycles. So I can pretty much tell you directly,  
13 Otero Canyon, Kirtland Air Force Base, the labs, you  
14 name it -- they all give me money some way. They're  
15 all my customers. I sell to the helicopter pilots.  
16 I sell to hopefully everybody. But the fact that  
17 the controversy is scaring -- the idea that I can  
18 take my family out there and blow up on munitions  
19 just might not make it so appealing anymore.

20 So I do think that the scare tactics or  
21 however the fence is being proposed is good, but we

22 all support Kirtland Air Force Base for the money  
23 they give us. There's no doubt. I'm here to say,  
24 give us the same respect. You might make us all  
25 lose our reason for living here, our reason for

1 making dollars, or even owning a bike shop. So it's  
2 kind of basically just look at who you're stepping  
3 on and how you're doing it. So thank you.

4 MR. MILLIGAN: Jim Calderone.

5 MR. CALDERONE: Hi. Let's see. Most of  
6 the points that I wanted to make have already been  
7 made, so I won't get into a lot of detail on those  
8 things.

9 There are a couple of things that I wanted  
10 to mention. I worked out in the areas on the east  
11 side of the withdrawal for the DOE from the late  
12 1980s up into 2000, and during that time, I worked  
13 with coordinating committees that coordinated the  
14 use of the land, the CRC and the CFAC agencies. I  
15 mention that only because my work on that committee  
16 and my awareness of what goes on out there leaves me  
17 completely convinced that there's a solution that  
18 can meet the mission of the base and still allow the  
19 use of Otero Canyon.

20 I guess, again, I don't want to get into  
21 details of things that have already been mentioned.

22 I guess I'm curious about the UXO issues. If, in  
23 fact, there is UXO out there, it needs to be dealt  
24 with, regardless of the fence line that ends up  
25 being there.

1       Regarding it being a brand-new issue,  
2 let's see. I personally witnessed the EOD come out  
3 with their trucks and trailers and unload a series  
4 of ATVs and this was in the early 1990s, and they  
5 told me that they were out there searching and  
6 surveying for UXOs. So it's not a new issue and  
7 somebody probably just needs to talk to them about  
8 what they found out there.

9       Okay. I guess there are a couple of  
10 points regarding the health care issues. Recently  
11 the CDC has made the statement that obesity is  
12 almost approaching tobacco as the number one cause  
13 of death in the country. They also stated that one  
14 in three children born in 2000 will develop  
15 diabetes. A recent Harvard study stated that \$90  
16 million per year are spent on health care costs, and  
17 the fact of the matter is, that area has been used  
18 primarily for exercise, and I contend that the area  
19 is far more valuable to the nation as a place that  
20 they can go exercise than a newly vacated area and  
21 an empty space that's another part of -- or that

22 becomes the empty corners and edges of an already

23 huge Air Force base.

24        So I guess the main point was that I was

25 hoping that Kirtland would try to work out a way

1 that their missions can be met and the trails are  
2 still available.

3 MR. MILLIGAN: Mark Reineke.

4 MR. REINEKE: There's kind of  
5 good-news-bad-news about being late on the agenda.  
6 The good news is, all the points have been made, so  
7 I don't have to make any points. And the bad news  
8 is, all the points have been made, so I don't have  
9 any points to make.

10 My name is Mark Reineke. I'm the  
11 president of the local chapter of Trail Partners, of  
12 the International Mountain Biking Association.  
13 We've worked with the Forest Service, City of  
14 Albuquerque, and hopefully in the future Kirtland  
15 Air Force Base on designing, maintaining, and  
16 building trails in the east mountain areas.

17 We appreciate that Kirtland Air Force Base  
18 needs a fence and needs to provide a secure  
19 environment for their tenants using that facility.  
20 I will kind of repeat what Gary mentioned earlier.  
21 We believe a fence is needed. Certainly as has been

22 pointed out by all the other speakers, there's lots  
23 of options here and issues to be considered in  
24 designing that fence, locating that fence, and  
25 deciding how it's going to be implemented.



1       We want to offer our assistance in working  
2 with Kirtland Air Force Base, the other land users  
3 in the area, to work on that issue and come up to a  
4 common agreement.

5       We talked a lot about the various users in  
6 that area. Unfortunately, not all users that use  
7 that trail system are responsible. There are  
8 irresponsible trail users, and so even from that  
9 perspective I can appreciate that a fence or some  
10 sort of security barrier is needed there. I guess  
11 Trail Partners would like to go along with Friends  
12 to Save Otero, in that the Madera Canyon road seems  
13 like a good logical process or alignment for the  
14 fence, but certainly there's lots of opportunities  
15 here.

16       I guess this issue has been kind of  
17 hanging out there for several years now, at least  
18 that we have been aware of it, and in May, when they  
19 came up, we heard that the environmental statement  
20 was going to be released, I never expected to have  
21 the opportunity to sit down with the Air Force and

22 actually talk about this. And so I believe that  
23 this public meeting tonight is a really positive  
24 step forward resolving these issues, coming to  
25 agreement that we can all live with. Thank you very

1 much.

2 MR. MILLIGAN: I think we can all agree  
3 that more discussion is appropriate. John O'Malia.

4 MR. O'MALIA: I have got a little  
5 confession to make. I thought that sheet out in the  
6 lobby was just a sign-in sheet.

7 My name is John O'Malia. I'm a retired  
8 master chief petty officer, worked on Kirtland Air  
9 Force Base for 19 years now, and I also have been  
10 riding Otero Canyon for 20 years. And I'm also  
11 involved from time to time in helping keeping that  
12 open when trees come down over the trail and  
13 removing that stuff. And in the 20 years I have  
14 been riding out there, I have never seen one helo  
15 come down and land at that pad up there on the top  
16 where I have been through there so many times. Not  
17 one.

18 Also, this is kind of a bash towards  
19 Kirtland, but you know, it seem to be preoccupied  
20 with that unrestricted unauthorized access up there.  
21 They might ought to take a look at their problem at

22 the end of Eubank. Thank you.

23 MR. MILLIGAN: Jason Strauch.

24 MR. STRAUCH: Good evening. Thank you.

25 Thank you, everyone, for staying so long. A lot of

1 good points been made, mostly on the Save Otero side  
2 based on the group here.

3 I'd like to address a couple of points.

4 First, my name is Jason Strauch. And I have a  
5 unique perspective in that not only am I an avid  
6 competitive cyclist, state champion, many records on  
7 hills, I also am an engineer at the national labs.  
8 So I kind of have the inside-the-fence perspective  
9 as well as the users' perspective.

10 One important perspective is the  
11 operational security of Kirtland, and I think, you  
12 know, the previous speaker mentioned that there's  
13 other holes in the gate or holes in the fence. From  
14 an operational security standpoint, the fence that's  
15 proposed doesn't increase their security as much as  
16 other alternatives that have been proposed by the  
17 Save Otero group, and that's a really important  
18 point to make.

19 Otero is very important now in our  
20 post-9/11 world. You know, we're all concerned  
21 about this security. And that is an important

22 concern. Does the fence, putting it in the straight  
23 line location, increase our security substantially?  
24 I don't believe so. The proposed fence line along  
25 the road is better for the security of the

1 facilities.

2       Some of the things that Sandia does -- you  
3 know, we do operational security, nuclear weapons,  
4 the Olympic Games, unmanned ground sensors,  
5 autonomous robotic systems for exactly these kind of  
6 applications.

7       And I'd just like to say that there is a  
8 better way. It's good for us to keep being able to  
9 use that area. I fully support having a fence that  
10 increases the security of the base facilities.

11 Thank you very much.

12       MR. MILLIGAN: Staci Stolp.

13       MS. STOLP: Seems like a long walk.  
14 Anyway, my name is Staci Stolp. My husband and I  
15 both work at Kirtland Air Force Base. I work for  
16 the Department of Defense. My husband works for the  
17 DOE. And many of our friends work on base, too.  
18 But just as we work at Kirtland, we are also avid  
19 outdoorsmen. Some of us are volunteers for search  
20 and rescue, and we feel that it would be a grave  
21 mistake on Kirtland's part to not take into account

22 some of the great suggestions that were offered here  
23 tonight, and look at some of the alternatives or  
24 relook at some of the alternatives that were  
25 proposed.



1       As many people said, no one disputes that  
2 Kirtland needs to increase its security. But over  
3 all, I believe my husband would agree -- he couldn't  
4 be here tonight -- would support looking at the  
5 alternatives proposed.

6       And to take up some of my time, one of our  
7 friends who also works at Kirtland would like to  
8 make some points, as well.

9       MR. RUSSELL: I'm not Staci's husband, in  
10 case anybody missed that. My name is Chris Russell,  
11 and I work at Sandia National Labs. Yeah,  
12 everyone's made some really good points up here  
13 tonight, and the point I think some people have kind  
14 of skated around, just due to the fact that they are  
15 affiliated with major organizations, you know, pro  
16 fence or, you know, pro boundary here and pro  
17 boundary there, can't say this, but tonight what you  
18 saw were percentages, you know, representations and  
19 percentages of different sorts of bikers in the  
20 community. There's bike racers, there's  
21 recreationalists who take their families or people

22 that just want to get their heart rate over 150.

23        So you need to kind of take that into

24 account. There's a lot of people that may or may

25 not be signing these sort of petitions just due to

1 their career drive or whatever.

2 But there's also certain types of people  
3 that are going to see the wildlife access points as  
4 just access points. And that's going to become  
5 pretty much a police enforcement issue for you and  
6 the City and whomever, and that's just something to  
7 consider. It's not a threat, but it's just  
8 something that I think needs to be addressed. So to  
9 minimize that, going with one of the other  
10 alternatives in the hard line, the GPS coordinates  
11 probably would be a good thing. So thank you.

12 MR. MILLIGAN: Ken Whiton.

13 MR. WHITON: I got to say I have never  
14 been in a room with a more fit and healthy bunch of  
15 people. I hope some of it rubs off on me.

16 We're addressing you people who are  
17 gracious enough to listen. We're also addressing  
18 these folks back here, and apparently there's some  
19 tape machine playing. So I appreciate these folks  
20 for sticking around and listening so patiently.

21 I am Ken Whiton. I'm fourth-generation

22 New Mexican. I'm also president of the New Mexico

23 Chapter of REP America, which is Republicans for

24 Environmental Protection. We are a national grass

25 roots organization of Republicans who care about the

1 environment. Now, we are not cheerleaders for the  
2 party. We are the environmental conscience of the  
3 party. I must thank Congresswoman Heather Wilson.  
4 Her representative here is also listening patiently.

5       Republicans office-holders today seem  
6 reluctant to have any positive involvement in issues  
7 of the environment. I must point out that  
8 protecting our environment has been a long and proud  
9 tradition of the Republican party. We at New Mexico  
10 REP America fully support Congresswoman Wilson's  
11 compromise proposal which allows for Kirtland's  
12 security while maintaining the public use of many of  
13 the trails in Otero Canyon.

14       There are several reasons why this  
15 compromise is important. One, this area, in  
16 actuality, has been public for decades, establishing  
17 a precedent for continued use. I heard 1943  
18 earlier. That's when I was born, and nobody doubts  
19 that I'm here. I don't see how anyone can doubt  
20 that the use of this area has been here for all of  
21 those years.

22 I also understand that such access was  
23 technically prohibited by Kirtland, but in fact, the  
24 prohibition obviously has never been enforced and  
25 boundaries are not clearly marked, according to

1 their own environmental assessment. I recognize  
2 legitimate natural security concerns. The proposed  
3 compromise deals with these concerns and saves the  
4 Department of Defense money, which is also ours, in  
5 the process.

6 I'm aware that Kirtland thinks there may  
7 be unexploded ordnance in the canyon, but in all  
8 these decades, none has been discovered, either on  
9 purpose or by accident. In fact, I'm not aware that  
10 Kirtland has ever demonstrated that there is a  
11 problem with the UXO. Surely Congresswoman Wilson  
12 could obtain funding for this kind of cleanup if  
13 they thought it was necessary.

14 Since there are several flaws in the DOD  
15 decision-making process, not the least of which is  
16 any mention of citizen -- that is, user -- input  
17 which is required under NEPA, or input from Native  
18 Americans, which is also required, it makes sense to  
19 seek a compromise now rather than invite problems  
20 later.

21 Other problems are that the EA never

22 mentions the public exclusion for Otero Canyon as an  
23 impact under land use or that the public has access  
24 at present, even though page 1-4 states the boundary  
25 is so indistinct that civilian personnel recreating



1 in the area unknowingly enter Kirtland Air Force  
2 Base. Here we find that the Department of Defense  
3 is admitting that they knew people were on the base  
4 property and supposedly in danger of the UXO because  
5 of poorly marked boundaries, yet they have obviously  
6 waited decades to act.

7       Let's follow the Congresswoman's very  
8 sensible leadership on Otero Canyon when she said,  
9 according to the newspaper, "There is a call for a  
10 balanced approach based on the unique aspects of  
11 Otero Canyon and Kirtland Air Force Base. By  
12 working together, we can find a way to improve  
13 security at the base and allow people to continue to  
14 have access to Otero Canyon." And I second her  
15 statement. Thank you.

16       MR. MILLIGAN: Tom Swiler?

17       MR. SWILER: I suppose I should thank  
18 Kirtland, first of all, for allowing us to use this  
19 trail for all the years when I suppose we shouldn't  
20 have been using it. But you know, I don't want to  
21 set a precedent that when they do this, that this

22 means that they have to give up land, either. I

23 think that some of this trail should be left open

24 because it's the right thing to do.

25       Now, Albuquerque is a major metropolitan

1 area, and we do need space to recreate. I have two  
2 young children and I can't go far from my home to  
3 ride a mountain bike. And being able to go to this  
4 canyon in 15 minutes and ride up to the top of it is  
5 completely breath-taking. And you know, I'm  
6 basically selfish here. I love that ride. You  
7 know, that's why I'm here. I'm selfish. I said I  
8 represent myself, and I do. I just feel more alive  
9 there than anything else in my day, and you know,  
10 that's why we're here.

11       Maybe the people who are drawing the  
12 boundaries don't recognize how passionate mountain  
13 bikers really are, but we really are, and we'd like  
14 to see this kept open. I think there is an  
15 excellent chance for compromise here, and I think  
16 this is a great meeting. I was on the Sandia  
17 Citizens Advisory Board for two years, and I never  
18 saw a meeting as positive as this one tonight. So  
19 good job, everybody.

20       MR. MILLIGAN: Dion Rivera.

21       MR. RIVERA: Dion Rivera. I am an

22 employee out at Sandia National Labs, a scientist

23 out there along with my wife. We moved to

24 Albuquerque about two years ago. One of the reasons

25 we like this area is because you have access to

1 areas such as Otero Canyon. We moved from Salt Lake  
2 City to here, and it's hard to find other areas in  
3 the west that have such easy access to great outdoor  
4 recreation as Albuquerque does.

5       There are actually a couple of things I'd  
6 like to discuss. One has to do with the Special  
7 Operations training that was brought up earlier as  
8 one of the reasons for the Air Force keeping a  
9 preferred fence line. In talking to the commander  
10 of that unit who spoke here tonight, they already  
11 operate three, four times a week out there. They  
12 actually, according to him, as I understood it, are  
13 in those landing zones about three or four times a  
14 week.

15       Now, there are people in Otero Canyon all  
16 week, every week, and he said they even operate on  
17 weekends. Sometimes on weekends there's probably a  
18 couple hundred people hiking up and down Otero  
19 Canyon and horseback riding, mountain biking. To me  
20 I really don't see the conflict between Special  
21 Operations and our use. If they're already

22 operating at least three to four times a week and  
23 people already have access to this area for, you  
24 know, seven days a week, there's no conflict. I  
25 just don't see it. So we can keep the status quo we

1 have now. It obviously has not hurt anybody,  
2 however long they have been operating out there.  
3       The other was the firing range for  
4 probably both Sandia and Air Force security guards  
5 for the M60. Now, I don't have too many friends  
6 who've been maimed by M60 shells up there. I don't  
7 know of anyone who's gone up there and said, "Oh,  
8 yeah, it's great, go up to the top of the canyon,  
9 listen to the M60s shooting out as the sun sets."

10       Maybe they do it, but I didn't have any  
11 information from the Air Force as to when the last  
12 training round was, but it doesn't seem to be a  
13 public safety issue. And frankly, if I thought it  
14 was a public safety issue, I don't think any of us  
15 would have even heard of Otero Canyon.

16       Lastly, we had a short talk on the Air  
17 Force Research Lab. The new fence proposed by the  
18 Friends of Otero, to me, would be perfectly adequate  
19 for security for the lab. I don't see how the  
20 current proposal put forth by the Air Force is going  
21 to add to the security of the Air Force research

22 facility at all. So to me that's just kind of a

23 moot point. Anyway, that's all my statement is.

24 Thank you.

25 MR. MILLIGAN: Michael Lucero, last but



1 not least.

2 MR. LUCERO: I think that one of the  
3 things that we can agree is that there needs to be  
4 some more dialogue and there are a lot of things  
5 that are still unclear in a lot of people's minds,  
6 and I think we need to pursue that. I think that is  
7 something that we can do.

8 SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: I'd like to know  
9 what the base is going to do from this point with  
10 this public comment and what your actions are going  
11 to be from here on.

12 MR. MOORE: As I said before, any comments  
13 that were made before or during or, in fact, up  
14 until the 16th, will be addressed in the EA. It is  
15 a draft document, and it is up to the base to take  
16 the information that came from this meeting and go  
17 back and think about it and decide if they want to  
18 go ahead with it. If they want to do something  
19 different, if they want to relook at the issues. I  
20 don't make that decision. I just write the  
21 document.

22           So it will be -- from my standpoint, we  
23 will answer the questions that have been raised in  
24 the EA, and it will be included as an alternative.  
25 I can assure you, however, that Kirtland is going to

1 look at this and decide what they want to do.

2 SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: And on the base  
3 side, once you guys receive this information, when  
4 is our next public hearing, public meeting?

5 MR. MILLIGAN: We don't have one scheduled  
6 at this point. But I would recommend that we sit  
7 down with you folks and some base officials and go  
8 over some of the things that were raised tonight.

9 SPEAKER FROM THE FLOOR: One of my  
10 concerns was that this public meeting was on very  
11 short notice and it wasn't well publicized. It was  
12 publicized by the Save Otero group, but not by the  
13 base. So I want to make sure for the next public  
14 meeting that the word gets out to everyone that's  
15 interested. That's my concern.

16 MR. MILLIGAN: I think what I'm proposing  
17 is that the Save Otero representatives sit down with  
18 base officials and hash through some of these issues  
19 where we can have more people there to answer your  
20 questions and concerns, and then publicize those  
21 results. And I think that can be done through the

22 web site, and we can advertise that as well.

23 MR. FITZPATRICK: If I may ask one

24 question. Can you tell me who on Kirtland will make

25 the final decision as to how you proceed in the

1 future?

2 MR. MILLIGAN: The final decision on the  
3 EA is the base commander.

4 MR. FITZPATRICK: Thank you.

5 MR. MILLIGAN: Is that it? Good. Thanks  
6 for coming, folks.

7 (The public information meeting concluded  
8 at 9:30 p.m.)

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1 STATE OF NEW MEXICO

SS

2 COUNTY OF BERNALILLO

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5 I, MARY ABERNATHY SEAL, New Mexico

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10 I FURTHER CERTIFY that I am neither

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